

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N^o. 498.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1868.

[PRICE 2d.]

HESTER'S HISTORY.

A NEW SERIAL TALE.

CHAPTER XX. HESTER IS PUZZLED.

IT may be that Lady Helen Munro has appeared—in the few short glimpses of her character revealed within the limits of this hurried tale—as a person of a character quite weak, and utterly without any will of her own. I am glad to have an opportunity of showing how mistaken was the latter idea. Weak she was; but then people of a weak mind are often known to be possessed of a strong will, especially where the concerns of other people are in question.

No sooner did her ladyship hear her son state in plain terms his determination never to marry the lady whom she had selected for his wife, than she immediately resolved that the wedding should take place with as little delay as was possible under existing circumstances. So long as he had remained quietly idle in the matter, delaying to begin his suit, she had been quite content with his humour, had seen no cause for haste. But when he declared himself anxious to put an honest straightforward finish to that very unsatisfactory sham which had been called his engagement, she at once became afflicted and insulted, and found that herself and dearest Janet had been extremely badly used.

"There need be no regret about it," Sir Archie said. "I am quite convinced that Miss Golden feels as I do. It will be pleasanter for all when the restraint of this mock engagement is removed. You will find that she will be pleased when you give her her release. You will know how to manage. It would be quite out of place for me to interfere in the matter."

"You know, Archie, I make every excuse for you," sobbed Lady Helen. "I feel very much being talked to by you in this meaningless manner, but I know how your poor head is turned about the rebels. If I believed what you say, as I did at the first shock, I should consider myself deeply insulted and dear Janet horribly wronged. But I do not believe you, dear Archie; I would not behave so wickedly towards you as to believe you. And my best advice to you is not to believe yourself. By-and-by you will be less worried, and your senses

will come back. I will promise you to forget every word you have said."

"I have thought well over every word," said Sir Archie, "and I shall never at any time withdraw so much as one. I beg, mother, that you will understand me once for all, and do your best to set this matter to rights. I shall depend on you to do so."

And Sir Archie walked out of the room.

But none the more was Lady Helen convinced that this marriage which she had planned should not take place.

"It is all nonsense," she said to Mrs. Hazelden; "he cannot mean to live single all his life, and he never made much objection to dear Janet before. I don't believe he knows the difference between one woman and another. And as for letting such a splendid fortune slip through one's fingers, never to speak of the sweet girl herself, it is quite out of the question to think of it. Oh, I quite rely upon dear Archie's coming to his senses by the time these shocking rebels have been all hanged. And in the mean time if we could get him quietly married, and carried off to France, or Italy, or some other nice place where the people have no wrongs, nor miseries, nor anything unpleasant of that kind, and one need not be afraid to go to sleep in one's bed! A vessel could take us from the bay just at hand, and we need not run the risk of being shot at as rebels on the road, or taken out of our coach and hanged to a wayside tree. I shall certainly lay my mind to it. And as for speaking to dear Janet, I shall do no such thing; except to consult her about getting her trousseau put in hand. Once that has been got ready, you know, Margaret, no man with a spark of feeling could draw back."

"You had better not thwart Archie," said Mrs. Hazelden. "Take my word for it he means what he says. And as for getting ready a trousseau under the circumstances—if you want to make yourself and the young lady feel very foolish, I think you had better do it. I believe you will be wise to act according to Archie's desire."

But Lady Helen here put her handkerchief to her eyes. And when Lady Helen put her handkerchief to her eyes eloquence were mere waste and reasoning foolishness. That very evening she opened her mind to Hester on the subject of Miss Golden's trousseau. And

having done so she felt more at ease, so much so, indeed, that she was enabled afterwards to tell Hester that she believed she might not begin the sewing for the wedding until the Christmas time should be over. She was planning some charades, some tableaux, some little gaieties, as an excuse to bring friends about, to make the evenings less dull than they had been. And Lady Helen had used a moderate word, when she called her evenings dull. She had a periodical attack of nightmare, coming on whenever dusk began to fall. She got on pretty well with her mornings, when she could state her opinions privately to every one who came near her, that dear Archie was over-anxious, could ransack her wardrobes, and plan masquerading costumes; but in the evenings she sat shrank up in a corner of her sofa, starting convulsively when poor Pat opened the door never so softly, and thinking that every shriek of the rising wind was the howling of rebels getting punished. And thus it had come to pass through her terror that Hester received her orders of an evening, sitting face to face with her ladyship, on one of her ladyship's embroidered drawing-room chairs. For Lady Helen's nervousness had a passion for gathering as many faces as possible round her couch. And if the faces could be found young and hopeful, as well as beautiful to look upon, they were by so much the more grateful to her ladyship's fearful eyes.

Miss Madge had begun another purse for Archie, and she knotted and knotted, and grew more silent and mysterious. Purses do wear out in the course of years, especially those of rich people, I suppose, who keep them pretty well filled. At all events, it is good to be provided against emergencies. The last had been red, but this was a green one, the sight of which colour amongst her fingers seemed to afford the Honourable Madge a most exquisite satisfaction. Not so Lady Helen. "Put that green thing away, Madge," she would whimper. "It is enough to compromise the whole family. As for you, I don't believe you would have the slightest objection to be hanged any minute. But I think you might consider other people!"

Miss Golden sang, and made other music with her fingers, upon spinnet and guitar, with a kindly enough pity for the lady's nervous state. And every evening her voice grew louder and more defiant to all fears and dangers. Yet had certainly the roses left her cheeks.

Miss Janet had reported very truly of Sir Archie, when she stated that he made efforts to divert his lady mother. And he was wonderfully patient, for a man, with her long dissertations to Hester on the subject of the fashions, both of these and former days. And he even went so far, on one occasion, as to recommend for her perusal—he seated at her right hand, and Hester at her left—a certain book of ancient costumes which he had picked up somewhere as a curiosity of literature. And Lady Helen remembered this the next morning, when in high consultation with Miss Madge, Miss

Golden, and Hester, on the subject of stage properties, in Hester's tower room. And she bade Hester run to the library and fetch the said book of costumes.

Hester hesitated. "Sir Archie Munro may be in the library, your ladyship," she said.

"If he is, he will not eat you, child!" said Lady Helen. "Tell him I want the book he spoke of last evening."

So Hester went, lingered on the stairs, in the hall; but meeting a servant, and not wishing to be seen hanging about, as if she had been afraid of something, was obliged to walk boldly into the room.

Sir Archie was there, as Hester had feared he might be, and he seemed more than glad to see her, as Hester had feared he might seem. He found her the book, and held it out for her to take. And as he so held it out he looked at her face, with a grave, earnest, and a long look; never thinking to be rude indeed—not his worst enemy could say that from such a look—but rather as if he were trying to read his future, of good or evil, of weal or woe—this being no time for speech—under eyelids that would not raise themselves, of a young shrinking face. But the book went from his hand, and Hester made quick steps towards the door.

"I beg you to wait a moment," said Sir Archie.

He did not want her to go just yet, but he was at a loss to know what to say that could keep her. He knew that he wanted to love her and to tell her that he loved her, but the time not being ripe he found it difficult to fill up the interval when such moments as the present arrived. There was that about her presence which hushed, while it attracted and made him glad, which left him little of his love in his bearing, save its dignity. But Hester had stopped and was waiting quietly. She was so resolved not to be foolish again, to take everything that might come as quite meant in good faith, to accept it as a matter of course.

Sir Archie had some mediæval tastes, and he knew a hoity face when he saw it in a picture, or out of a picture; and it impressed him. And as Hester stood a little off, with her yellow head shining against the brown wainscot, he remembered a painting in a dusky cloister of a very old monastery he had visited long ago. It was an angel with a golden censer, personifying prayer.

The memory brought with it a suggestion; and Sir Archie's next speech may not seem apt for the occasion.

"I am in danger and difficulty," he said; "I would ask you to pray for me."

"Yes," said Hester, readily, and with relief. She had feared he had been going to say—she knew not what.

But the ready, bright, relieved face, was too much for Sir Archie's prudence.

"Do so," he said with a glow in his eyes of the real true love that was in him, "and I shall owe you a deep debt of gratitude. And if I live through these times it will be the business of

my life to show it, by making you happy—if you will let me—”

Sir Archie had not intended to say so much. He stopped undecided whether it were generous at this moment to go on. But already Hester's courage was not proof against so much as had been said. This was not the first time that Sir Archie had so frightened her. She retreated to the door, her eyes fixed as if fascinated on a button of Sir Archie's coat. Her fingers felt the handle of the door. She dropped a hurried curtsy, and disappeared.

“Why are your cheeks so scarlet, child?” asked Lady Helen, somewhat sharply, as Hester gave her the book, in the tower room.

“Dear me, Helen!” said Miss Madge, “you must expect that young things will run themselves out of breath upon a staircase. When I was a young thing I broke both my legs twice with taking flying leaps down-stairs.”

Lady Helen shrugged her shoulders. “My good Madge,” she said, “you were always an exceptional creature. I hope Miss Cashel does not take flying leaps down-stairs.”

“No, indeed!” said Hester, so earnestly that her ladyship laughed; which was a good omen for the day. And the business of the properties went on.

“I shall perform in this!” cried Miss Janet, picking out a gown from a heap of strange garments. “What a dainty piece of finery! I shall play princess of the rebels, Queen of Ireland in my own right. I shall order the King of England to be brought before me in chains. And I shall put my foot upon his neck!”

Miss Janet threw herself into an attitude of mock defiance, holding the dress outspread before her. Lady Helen shrieked, and sank into a seat. The dress was a stiff white silk, richly wrought and ornamented with shamrocks in green, and with a green velvet train.

“Put it away!” cried Lady Helen. “Ah, my dear Janet! let it be torn up and burned! I wore it when the United Irish Society was in favour. What greens and what shamrocks were worn in those days! Let it be torn up and burned, every shred of it, lest it cost us our lives!”

“Poor gown!” said Miss Janet, coolly; “and I vow it is a brave gown. Ah, I pray you, Lady Helen, invite the king to dinner. I will dine at his very elbow in this gown. And if his majesty should make a remark I shall modestly call his attention to the trees outside the window. And I shall say, ‘I wonder your majesty does not indict the arch-roguish Nature for high treason!’”

But Lady Helen had fainted by this time. And in a scramble for smelling-bottles the morning's work came to an end.

“I am in danger and difficulty.—The business of my life shall be to make you happy, if you will let me.” Hester sewed all her seams on the wrong side of her cloth, and stitched a sleeve of one colour into a bodice of another. It was not to be expected that her poor head

should be very clear this afternoon. Nevertheless, though Lady Helen had given orders for some harlequin costumes, it was also not to be expected that she should be satisfied unless some little method might appear to have been employed in their contrivance. So Hester was obliged to give up her work for the hour.

She put on her cloak and went down the glen. It was close upon Christmas now, and the frost crackled under her feet as she crossed the old drawbridge over the dried-up moat. The falls were bound up, and the air was quite still. Grey furrows seamed the face of the heavens. Sullen clouds, that looked as if bursting with a secret evil portent, leaned their rough edges on the frowning hills, and looked down the sad valleys, as if expecting something. The cottage doors were shut, partly from cold, and partly from fear, and here and there a face, anxious or grieved, looked out from a window to see who was going past.

Hester walked for an hour, as fast as her flying feet could carry her, through the byeways of the hills, till she came in sight of the village; and then she sat down to draw breath. The openings of many glens lay under her eyes. She could follow their windings and foldings among the mountains, as they travelled on and up towards the skies, wrapping them with purple and amber, into their secret sombre resting places. But Hester's face was towards the village, and her eyes were on the chimneys of one house.

“I will go to her,” said Hester, “and I will ask her what it means. I will tell her every word, if I were to die of shame the next minute!”

And so off Hester started again, nor paused till she stood in Mrs. Hazeldean's parlour.

Mrs. Hazeldean was sitting sewing by her fireside. A basket of bright flannels was at her feet, and a garment made of the same was on her knee. The sweet grave face looked as busy with thought as her fingers were busy with the needle. But there were no restless cares nor nervous fears behind that face. No solitude ever banished the tender look of lurking joy from those eyes and lips, nor yet the broad look of satisfied trust in a strength unutterable that had not failed, nor could fail, to furnish nerve for her right hand, and courage for her heart. No sad days could shadow that brow, but with a passing cloud. For the light that shone upon it was a reflex from a sun that knows no setting.

Mrs. Hazeldean was glad, surprised, to see Hester come in; not quite satisfied with her face. She thought the girl looked a little wild and feverish. Had she walked too fast? Was she cold, or hot? Why had she thought of coming so far on such a day, or at least why had she not come earlier? There would hardly be time for her to get home before dusk. Mrs. Hazeldean had removed Hester's hat, and smoothed back with two fond hands the fair locks a little blown astray by the mountain air; and she had pulled off her gloves, and was

chafing some chilled fingers between her own warm palms.

All this was very trying for Hester. If the fever of her suspense had not made her almost reckless, her resolution must have melted into nothing at such treatment. But the thought of the flying moments pressed her hard; and the dread of returning to her work, it might be to a solitary room, with the burthen of that secret and that wonder still upon her, lent her tongue a desperation that did the part of real courage.

"I must not stay five minutes, Mrs. Hazledean," said Hester, trying to answer two questions at once. "And I should not have come out on such a day if I had not been driven out."

"My darling!" said Mrs. Hazledean, alarmed; "who has driven you out?"

"No person," said Hester. "Nothing except my own distress of mind."

She had got her hands disentangled from among her friend's soft fingers by this time, and she had tied on her hat and stood ready for flight. She knew that she was running a terrible risk in speaking the words that were waiting on her tongue. She might be misunderstood; nothing else seemed so natural to expect as that she should. She might offend, disgust, the friend who had cherished her. So she stood ready to fly from before this face that she loved, if it so happened that dear face should grow dark at her audacity.

"Distress of mind!" said Mrs. Hazledean; and as she spoke she guessed even more than was the truth.

"I came here, Mrs. Hazledean," said Hester, "to ask you if you know what Sir Archie means?"

Mrs. Hazledean's eyes were on Hester's face, and saw the face turn white with the effort that had been made. Why had Archie been so foolish? Mrs. Hazledean's two hands were suddenly forth, laid hold of the figure that stood so aloof, ready for flight, and pulled it down without ceremony against her knee.

"I cannot know what he has been doing," she said, "but I venture to say that he means to do well."

"Mrs. Hazledean!" said Hester, "I must say something more. He—behaves strangely to me. I dare not understand him. I came to tell you this, though I thought that the telling might have killed me."

"Hester," said Mrs. Hazledean, after one minute's pause, "I have not got any liberty to interfere with Sir Archie's secrets, but I will say so much as this—I have known him all my life, and I believe that you may trust him."

Hester's face sank in her lap, and remained there as if the girl had been annihilated. But a few moments went by, and Hester's wits were alive again.

"But, Mrs. Hazledean," she began again, desperately.

But Mrs. Hazledean stopped her mouth with a kiss. "I will not hear a word more," she

said, "You shall not distress yourself with another syllable." And she was thinking what was to be done about Hester. She must take her from the castle, and get her under her own wing. "But I am glad you came here, to-day, and I am glad you spoke to me." She went on: "So do not begin to fret lest you were wrong. Now, you shall not go back this evening. I will send them a message."

But Hester was on her feet.

"No, no, I am going," she said; and without waiting to be staid, took her burning face out of the house, and up the glen on the track to the castle.

For Hester was not satisfied. She had not, after all her hardy efforts, had the daring to say, "But I have got orders concerning Miss Golden's wedding trousseau." She must have blundered very sadly in her speaking to Mrs. Hazledean; or Mrs. Hazledean must have made a great mistake. Why, it was only this very morning that Lady Helen had consulted her about the fashioning of a splendid bridal dress. So Hester had told her secret; and gained an extra heartache in exchange.

CHAPTER XXI. THE FRENCH ARE IN THE BAY.

SEWING is a kind of occupation for the hands which leaves the brain very free to think. More so almost than any other sort of work. Spinning make a noise, and writing engages the mind, more or less. Sewing is silent, monotonous, mechanical; once a device has been shaped by the scissors, and the fingers know the tricks of the device.

Sewing is a sort of secret handwriting, peculiar to women. Many a strange history, many a life's poem, has been traced in thread by the needle, hemmed into sheets, darned into stockings to be trodden under a thankless foot, stitched into wreathings of flowers and garlands. Every day these records are written, but never read. Characters marked in invisible ink will lie hidden in blank parchment, unsuspected, for years, and at last the breath of fire, like the touch of a wizard, will call them to light, and deliver their message. But no sage will ever translate the histories traced by the needle, of patience, of heroism, of passion, and anguish. How they are written and stored, these poems! Every household has its stores of such family archives. In the linen chests they lie; on the shelves of deep presses; in the drawers strewn with lavender. In the wardrobe hung with dresses, in the cupboard with mended hose; in the locked drawer where the little trousseau is arranged, smooth and orderly, of the baby who died; in the trunks, packed between laughing and crying, of the bride who will shortly go forth. If a light were suddenly given to read these hidden writings, what wild revelations, what beautiful lessons, what outpourings of joy, what majestic examples of endurance would not startle the world, and make it blush for the affectations it treasures in staring print!

Hester was making some little frills, and

every stitch in them was aware that she had got into a scrape. They all knew exceedingly well that she had been thinking far too much about Sir Archie, and what he could mean, and what he could not mean; that she had followed a rash impulse and out-stepped all maidenly dignity in speaking of Sir Archie to his aunt; although Mrs. Hazeldean had been too noble to show displeasure at her conduct, to do anything but make an effort to soothe her. Though Mrs. Hazeldean had even gone too far in the effort, saying something most strange and startling, the meaning of which Hester in her confusion had not taken hold of; for it was not to be admitted for one moment that some words which fast clung to Hester's memory could endure to bear the construction which a daring mind might put upon them.

So when the frills got far too wise, Hester bundled them away, and sat brooding over her fire like a second Cinderella, not unhappy because she could not go to a ball, but because her poor little lonely heart was sore, with an aching and a burning to which all her former troubles looked as mere flying shadows, as the fretting of a babe for broken toys.

And this brooding over the fire would not do. Hester had sense enough to take out her desk, and to task herself to the writing of some letters.

A letter to Lady Humphrey, and a letter to the Mother Augustine, and lastly one other, which ought to have been written long ago, a letter to Mr. Pierce in which his ring was to be enclosed. So a little note was penned, hoping that Mr. Humphrey would excuse the regretful writer, who had found herself unable to fulfil his wishes about the ring. And when the letters had been folded and addressed Hester went into her bedroom for some wax which she had bought. And she left that foolish ring upon her desk among the papers.

Meantime the letters by evening post had arrived in the castle drawing-room. Miss Golden had had her share, had read, and had not been pleased. She was always looking out for some writing in one particular hand; and as this never appeared, it is not likely that her letters should make her glad. Lady Helen was asleep upon her sofa, so her letters had been laid beside her, at her hand. Miss Madge had read a letter from her good friend M., who had helped her to make that memorable pasty. Miss Madge was somewhat flushed, Miss Madge was quite elated. Miss Madge began to hum in a low voice to herself:

The French are in the bay!
Says the Shan van Vocht.
The French are in the bay!
Says the Shan van Vocht.
The French are in the bay!—

"What's that you are saying about the French, Madge?" asked Lady Helen, waking. "I wish you would not talk about them, blood-thirsty wretches!" And Lady Helen began to break the seals of her letters.

A scream followed the reading of the first, just as the drawing-room door opened, and Sir Archie came in.

"Archie! Archie!" cried her ladyship, "is this true, what they have written me? There is a rumour that a fleet of war-ships has left France, and that it is coming to the assistance of the rebels."

"I have heard it," said Sir Archie, "and I think it likely to be true. But you need not be uneasy, mother, they are not going to storm you in your drawing-room."

Sir Archie looked pale, yet cheerful. But Lady Helen was carried to her bed. And Miss Madge was in haste to reply to the letter of her friend M.; and she went humming her snatch of song up the stairs to her tower-room, where she locked herself in, with pen and ink, for the night.

Miss Golden felt herself lonely and ill-treated. There was no chance of peace and a little gaiety to be had in this miserable country. The troubles were getting thicker in it every day that shone. And here was she, miles and miles away from the only friend she cared about, all for a foolish quarrel of her making, which ought to have been cleared up long ago. And now he was not thinking of her, would leave her here to her fate. Oh, Pierce! Pierce! would that she were at home in England, near him!

Miss Janet was getting nervous when she indulged such thoughts as these, for she was not given to heaping reproaches upon her own so wilful head. And in such a desponding frame of mind she walked into Hester's room.

Hester was not there. Hester was in her bedroom. Miss Janet stood at the fire, and then Miss Janet walked to the table. On the table she saw letters, and one of them addressed to Mr. Pierce Humphrey, captain in his majesty's — regiment. And she also saw a ring which she knew to be her own, at least a ring which had once been her own; and it was fastened to a ribbon which had been worn round the neck. And the sight made her sick of the letter and of the ring.

The sight made her sick, because she was not in her usual frame of mind. If she had been like her ordinary self she would have called in a loud voice for Miss Hester to come forth out of her bedroom; and she would probably have with difficulty, if at all, restrained herself from boxing both the ears of that young woman, and pinching both her pale dainty cheeks. But there was a lump in Janet's throat, and a genuine unwonted throe of anguish and remorse tightening her heart. She crept away to her room in the humiliation of tears, and she certainly hated Hester—the sly thing—from that night.

But the next day she was not so sickly and sentimental. She took occasion to instal herself for an hour in Hester's room, and she sat staring at the girl and putting questions to her.

"Do you know people in London called Humphrey?" asked Miss Golden.

"Yes," answered Hester, with a sudden vivid blush.

"What a soft silly fool the girl is!" thought Miss Golden. But Hester was only blushing because she was getting forced to disobey the Mother Augustine.

"People?" asked Miss Janet again, sharply.

"Yes, people," answered Hester.

"You know Lady Humphrey, of Hampton Court?"

"I know her," said Hester."

"And you also know her son, Mr. Pierce?" continued Janet.

"I know him also."

"Very probably Lady Humphrey was the friend of whom you told me once before?"

"Lady Humphrey was the friend."

"Humph!" said Miss Golden; and then added, with a sudden bitter change in her voice, "Has Lady Helen yet consulted you on the subject of a bridal trousseau?"

"Yes," answered Hester.

"See that you are industrious, then!" said Miss Janet, superciliously, and went, singing a sprightly catch, out of the room.

"The little ambitious monkey!" cried Miss Janet, in her chamber. "Must send a poor soldier back his ring because a fine estated baronet should admire her yellow hair! Miss Innocence! you have robbed me of my lover. Then I shall take especial care that you shall never find yourself mistress of Glenluce."

So Miss Janet could be rather coarse in her threats and suspicions when she was angry.

But Hester put down her sewing for a few moments while she reflected on the confession which she had been led into making. She might as well have told Miss Golden all the tale of Pierce's ring. Well, it could not matter now. The ring had been returned with her explanation. Mr. Pierce could manage best his own affairs, without a doubt. And it were silly and very awkward, such a tale, at such a time, when the wedding robes were ordered, and the bridegroom was Sir Archie Munro.

"My dear," said Miss Madge, "what is this story that Miss Golden has been telling me? A secret connexion with Lady Humphrey! Secret I must say, since you never said a word of it. And the name of Lady Humphrey is a horror in this house. A horror to Lady Helen. My dear, Lady Helen is in a panic!"

"Lady Helen is often in a panic, Miss Madge," said Hester.

"My dear, don't grow pert. I never knew you pert. Miss Golden is pert, very. My dear, Lady Helen has some reason to be alarmed. A secret connexion with Lady Humphrey!"

"Not secret, Miss Madge. Mrs. Hazelden has known of it!" said Hester, stoutly.

"Margaret. Ah! that is not so bad. Well, my dear, I wonder at Margaret. But you, perhaps, have never known any evil of Lady Humphrey?"

"No, Miss Madge," said Hester:

"Hist, then, my dear! and I will tell you what they say of her."

THE LAND OF EARTHQUAKES.

THE Spaniards, in South America, were not without early intimation of the insecurity of the soil. Lima was founded in 1535, under the high-sounding title of Ciudad de los Reyes, or City of the Kings, since altered to its present name. In 1582, Lima had its first recorded attack of earthquake. The centre of the shock, however, was lower down along the coast, in the neighbourhood of Arequipa, founded by Pizarro some twelve months after the establishment of Lima. Arequipa was laid in ruins then, as now; but Lima escaped with a warning. Lima's turn, however, was not long in coming. Four years afterwards, it was laid prostrate; and so great was the catastrophe, even in that land of catastrophes, that the anniversary of that destruction is solemnly commemorated, to the present time, on the day of the Visitation of Elizabeth. Lima had its third attack in 1609. In November, 1630, there was another earthquake; but so many of the citizens contrived to escape, that they, then and there, instituted the Festival of Nuestra Señora del Milagro, which is celebrated annually to this day.

Thenceforth, earthquake and city may be truly said to have entered into contest for possession of the soil. Earthquake returned to the charge in 1655, with such violence that, for the first time, the citizens camped for several days in the country districts around. When they returned, they found no stone standing on another; nevertheless, the city rose again. After this, there was no earthquake for some twenty years. Again, ten years later, in 1687, at four o'clock in the morning, houses and public edifices came tumbling down without the least previous intimation: the inhabitants, as usual, rushing into the squares and open spaces. The miserable consolation, however, of looking on in safety was this time denied them. At six in the morning the earthquake repeated its attack with renewed vigour, and the sea, retiring and rising in a wall of inky waters—as it did in the great earthquake of this year—dashed back with overwhelming force over the land. Callao, which had arisen as the port of Lima, a few miles from it, was entirely destroyed, and most of the inhabitants were carried away by the receding waters. The local records, preserved to us by Don Antonio de Ulloa, captain of his most Christian majesty's navy, mention this as the most disastrous visitation to that date. December, 1690, September, 1697, July, 1699, February, 1716, January, 1725, December, 1732, were all earthquake months in Lima. In 1734 and 1745 there were more earthquakes. On the 28th of October, 1746, at half-past ten at night, the first shock was felt of another earthquake, and within the space of three

minutes all the buildings in the city, great and small, public and private, were heaps of ruins, burying with them those inhabitants who had not been quick enough in escaping to the squares. Then succeeded a moment's calm, as when the heavy ordnance has opened the battle, and the lighter, but more numerous, musketry prepares to follow. Soon it began again, and the houseless homeless inhabitants counted two hundred distinct shocks within the following twenty-four hours. These shocks continued until the February of the following year, and were computed at four hundred and fifty in all. On this occasion the port of Callao sank quite down below the level of the sea. Nothing was left standing, save a piece of wall belonging to the fort of Santa Cruz, on which twenty-two persons contrived to save themselves. Of the twenty-three ships then in port, nineteen were wholly sunk, and the remaining four carried a considerable distance inland. Of the four thousand inhabitants, which the port of Callao then numbered, only two hundred survived. In Lima, thirteen hundred dead bodies were excavated from the ruins, exclusive of great numbers of maimed, who afterwards died of their hurts. Commander Wilkes, of the United States exploring expedition of 1849, was able in that year to define the site of the old port of Callao beneath the sea.

So much for Lima. Let us next take the case of Caracas, chief city of the Republic of Venezuela.

Ascension Day, 1812, rose fair and bright in that city. The air was calm—the sky unclouded: it is an error to suppose that earthquakes are usually accompanied, or preceded, by any threatening appearance of the elements. Large numbers of the inhabitants were at church, in attendance on the services of the day. Suddenly, the bells tolled without touch of mortal hand: this was the first intimation of the earthquake, which, almost simultaneously, was upon the unhappy people. The movement of the earth—as in the late widespread catastrophe—was from north to south, with transverse jerks from east to west. These cross agitations of the surface, occurring with extreme rapidity, instantly prostrated everything animate and inanimate. The inhabitants were unable to crawl to the church doors, and those vast churches, which are characteristic of all South American cities, from the largest to the smallest, descended in ruins around them. Ten thousand persons are said to have been killed in the churches alone. The churches of La Trinidad and Alta Gracia, more than one hundred and fifty feet in height, with naves supported by pillars of twelve and fifteen feet in diameter, were reduced to masses of ruin little more than a man's height. In the barracks, a regiment of soldiers had just been drawn up under arms, ready to form part of a procession that was to take place after divine service. Scarcely a man of them was left. And all this was the work of a single minute. From the first tolling of a bell to the falling of the last

stone of the city of Caracas, one minute only elapsed. Many thousand persons were maimed and wounded, for whom there was no shelter, no medicine, no food, scarcely a drop of water. There were not even implements wherewith to extricate them from the ruins which lay upon them. The survivors dug out with their fingers two thousand of their crushed fellow-citizens, who had still some life remaining in them. The shock had broken the pipes conveying water; the falling in of the earth had choked up the springs which supplied them; there were no utensils in which to carry water from the river. The wounded and sick were carried to the river's bank, and there left under such protection as the foliage afforded. The night, we are told, rose calm and serene; the round full moon shone over the sad labours of the survivors. Mothers still carried their dead children about, refusing to believe that life had entirely fled. Troops of relatives and friends sought for missing ones, up and down streets now to be traced only by long lines of ruins. A sterner duty yet remained. Twelve thousand dead bodies lay around, and decomposition, within the tropics, may be said to begin at the moment of death. There were no means of digging graves; the bodies must be burnt, and that at once. Bands of citizens were set apart for this duty. Vast piles of timber from the ruins of their homes were raised at frequent intervals; bodies of fathers, husbands, wives, children, were laid on them; and soon the whole sky was lighted with these awful flames. This lasted for several days, during which the survivors strictly devoted themselves to religious exercises. Some sang hymns; others confessed crimes of which they had never been suspected; numbers made what compensation was in their power.

Narratives as sad could be taken from Santiago (1730); Riobamba, near Quito (1797); Concepcion (1835); New Granada (1837). Caracas soon rose from its ruins, and is now a handsome city of some fifty thousand inhabitants. As far as accounts inform us, it has escaped the catastrophe of 1868.

Up to the present time, scientific witnesses assure us that little faith is to be reposed in those appearances which superstition commonly connects with earthquakes. One scientific person indeed—for as such we must account a professor of mathematics in the University of Lima, then the most famous seat of learning on the whole of the American continent—published, in 1727, a work entitled *L'Horloge Astronomique des Tremblemens de Terre*, or *Astronomical Dial of the Earthquakes*, in which he marked out the fatal hours in which they might be apprehended. But, as we have already seen, it did not help towards the saving of his fellow-citizens during the frequent attacks to which Lima has been subjected. In truth, earthquakes occur indifferently at all hours of the twenty-four, and at all periods of the year. The circumstances and surroundings which accompany them on some occasions, are

absolutely wanting in others. The subterranean sounds (bramidos) which at ordinary periods accompany great earthquakes, cannot be said to be essentially connected with them. There may be earthquake without the peculiar rumblings, and the peculiar rumblings without earthquake. Thus, the earthquake of 4th February, 1797, which destroyed Riobamba, and which Humboldt called "one of the most fearful phenomena recorded in the physical history of our planet," was unaccompanied by any subterranean noise whatever. Again, in the elevated table-land of Guanaxuato, subterranean thunders began about midnight of the 9th January, 1784, and continued without intermission for the space of a whole month, without any disturbing motion of the earth. The city lies among some of the richest silver mines in the world, and large quantities of silver, in bars, were stored within it. Nevertheless, the inhabitants forsook all, expecting the earthquake to be upon them every moment. But, within the city, there was no earthquake; and, at the bottom of the deepest mines, one thousand six hundred feet under ground, no shock was felt.

The earth movement appears to vary considerably. It has been already mentioned as occurring from north to south, with quick transverse jerks from east to west. But this is by no means always the case. The movement is sometimes upward, sometimes rotary. In the earthquake near Quito, already referred to, many bodies of inhabitants were thrown into the air: some being found on the hill of Cauca, several hundred feet in height, and on the opposite side of the river. A sailor in mid-ocean was violently flung into the rigging from the deck, as if a mine had exploded under the ship. In other instances, walls are observed to be twisted, although not thrown down; and rows of trees will be turned from their previous parallel direction. Stranger still is the facility with which objects on the surface of the earth have been found to shift from one place to another. The furniture of one house has been found on the ruins of a neighbour's; and, at Quito, the council of justice had, in many cases, to decide on the ownership of property, even including fields and growing crops, which had thus shifted their positions, without sustaining much apparent injury.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

A BASKETFUL OF VEGETABLES.

A MAN cannot more thoroughly taste the enjoyment of the country and the proud possession of a rood of ground that well maintains its man, than soon after a hearty breakfast—laughter its sauce, and kindly sociability its perpetual entremet—to toss on his deer-stalker, slip on his stiff but friendly old garden gloves, snatch up the big wooden basket (this is no bull, for have we not brass shoeing-horns and English China?), and, forgetting all about the curse of Cain, fall hard at work in the garden, volun-

tarily incurring its penalties. Then does he beat soft green bundles of lettuces against the bottom of his spade, till the friable chocolate earth drops from the fine shallow thready roots, as he chops off part of the milky and narcotic stems; or, regardless that "all the perfumes of Araby" will not for some time sweeten his little hand, drag at the tuby stalks of onions, whose globular roots, tired of summer heat and confinement, have long since worked themselves free of the soil, and now lie rolling about outside their beds in lolling laziness, their dry red skin hanging in odorous shreds round their green-striped plump bodies, which the Egyptians of the Pyramids once worshipped as emblems of those concentric rings of stars that gird our earth. Or, perhaps, if it be earlier summer, he retires among the green lanes of melting marrowfats, and there, happy as Alcinous, whose crown was of vine tendrils, plucks the dimpled pods, tugging out the yellowing vines now and then in his zeal for the kitchen, occasionally opening a pod with a pop, and stripping off the string of soft green beads. But the man who really loves a garden will not rest satisfied with merely persuading his scarlet-skinned tapering radishes to rise earlier than they had intended, or with plucking those great woolly-podded broad beans with the black speckled flowers; but will take a manlier pleasure in driving his shining spade deep into the potato ground, and loosening the green stalks with the night-shade flowers of purple and yellow, to pick out the clear-rinded kidney-shaped tubers that judiciously applied hot water will turn to "balls of flour." Not less pleasant is the honest delve in the celery bed, down in the trenches, digging up the great reddish-white fagots of pleasant-smelling stalk and root; then hewing them into shape with the big garden knife, lopping off the lavish green plumes, and shredding away all the coarser fluted pinkish folds that envelop the savoury vegetable. And here, talking of the pleasure of lopping with a garden knife at creatures that do not feel pain, and are even the better for being wounded, let us not forget the innocent joy of cutting the first snowy cauliflower, over which the younger leaves have been aforesaid bent with snapped stalks, to guard it from the dangerous admiration of the too fervid sun. How splendid the embossed flowery surface! And in the morning how the dew pearls the leaves, and runs in the sunlight into pools of melting diamond. Very pleasant, too, as lord of a garden, and therefore partner in the earth's surface, on a May morning to take one's saw-edged asparagus knife, and walk between the high rounded beds, where the sharp green spears are piercing through, and to stab down and cut them with a slant pressure, and then go over the field of battle and pick up the fallen!

Most people have experienced these tranquil delights; all people like to have them recalled in writing. Mr. Browning, in his highly original poem of "Fra Lippo Lippi," has well shown, that objects which we pass daily with in-

difference, become new and interesting when reproduced, individualised, and focussed by art; this fact is eternally true, and is one of the great secrets of the origin of the pleasure we derive from the representation of nature.

It is always pleasant, walking in a garden, to remember the native home of the flowers, and imagine them surrounded by their own scenery. It gives them a new interest and a fresh beauty. We see them growing, the dewy Auriculas, among the moss and snow of the Lower Alps; the Guernsey Lily in the Japanese meadow; the Ranunculus in the fields of Cyprus; the rich dyed Pelargonium in the rank kloof of the Caffre frontier; the flaunting Dahlia in the plains of sunny Mexico; the burnished Escholtzia in the sands of hot Peru; the gay yellow bladders of the Calceolaria in the fiery forests of Chili. Think of them with these surroundings, and you will see how the flowers fit their own special countries. A Caffre beauty would twist a thick cluster of dark crimson Pelargoniums in her black oily hair. The dashing Mexican horseman, all leather and lace, would stick a huge white dahlia in the band of his enormous sombrero. A Japanese lady would pace over the bamboo-bridge with a Guernsey lily carried like a sceptre in her hand.

Just so it is with vegetables; they too have their history, their legends, and their poetry. It is not uninteresting to recal whence they came, and how they reached in slow procession their great parliament house in Covent Garden. Crusaders, merchants, pilgrims, monks, brought them to us from eastern hill, and southern plain, from northern meadow, and from western forests.

Those slow changes of the patient toiling world which slowly, very slowly, ground the sand from the solid rock, and blackened the tree ferns into coal, collected from all regions of the world the vegetables that now deck our tables. Many strange histories are wrapped up in the glossy Portugal onion, and the portly pumpkin; the cauliflower came to Italy from Cyprus, and in Elizabeth's reign spread its powdered wigs in Italian gardens, which Keats's Pot of Basil has consecrated for ever. It did not spread in England, however, much before William and Mary. The tender and agreeable broccoli came to France from Italy, about 1560 or so. The useful turnips, known to the Romans, and mentioned both by Pliny and Columella, were grown in English gardens in the sixteenth century, but not in open fields until nearly Queen Anne's reign. The Greeks knew our carrots. Scorzonera (pleasant with white sauce), a well known Moorish and Spanish antidote for snake bites, was introduced into France in 1616. The savoury shallot was brought by Greek merchants from the sandy plains of Ascalon in Palestine, where it still grows wild. Pliny and Strabo both mention it. Our good old unprejudiced friend, spinach, derived its name from its native country, Hispania, thence Hispanica, Hispanage, and was used by our monks on fast days as early as 1358.

Potatoes were at first expensive luxuries, and had an evil name, as several passages in Shakespeare show. They are South American plants, that grow on the western coasts as well as on high elevations. They are supposed to have first come from the Quito hills, to Spain, early in the sixteenth century. They were then called papas. Introduced into Italy, they were called taratouffi, truffles. Thence, they spread to Vienna in 1598. Sir John Hawkins, brought them first to England from Santa Fe in 1563. But Drake and Raleigh are also claimed as introducers of "the curse of Ireland." If Raleigh introduced them, they must have come in 1586, when his ships returned from Virginia. He certainly introduced the use of the fickle and sloth feeding tuber, at his estates near Youghal, one of the Southwells first planting them. They were soon after grown in Lancashire—thrown there, some say, by a shipwreck. In 1619 potatoes sold at one shilling the pound. It is said they were not known in Flanders until 1620.

Celery, was introduced into England by a French general, Marshal Camille Tallard, whom Marlborough defeated and took prisoner at the overthrow of Blenheim, in 1704. He was a tremendous creature at home, being a count and a marshal, and he knew England, as he had been ambassador here in 1697. When brought by powder-blackened Corporal Trim and his friends before the impassive English duke, Tallard said:

"Your grace has beaten the finest troops in Europe."

"You will, I hope," replied our man, "except those who have defeated them."

The marshal being thus beaten both by English hands and English tongues, remained with us, diffusing the knowledge of celery, fragrant ingredient of the best soups, until 1713, when he returned to his master, Louis the Fourteenth, and was made a duke. He became secretary of state in 1726, and two years after ceased for ever to read official papers, to burn official sealing wax, and to diffuse a knowledge of celery.

A confusion between the Latin words for parsnip and carrot compels us here to pour forth some long accumulating gall against Pliny. We have been lately still more embittered by a serious discussion in a German writer as to whether the Blitum of Pliny was spinach or amaranth, (oh, vexed ghost of Milton, only think of amaranth used in salad!) and whether their Buglossum was borage, the blue flowered weed which we put into cider cup. It is quite impossible—that is the simple fact, and we boldly avow it—to define either Pliny's animals, fish, or herbs. It is a mere chance whether the creature he writes about, is a mule, a zebra, or an ass; whether the fish he mentions is turbot, cod, or good red herring; whether the plant on which he expatiates, is plum, pear, or quince. In fact, his farrago of imperfectly digested learning is all missorted and unindexed, and has become very nearly what printers call "pie."

Here and there a sound fact, an entire letter, a clear line, remains. The rest is blurred, topsy-turvy, gone to pieces. For our own sakes we would rather have six sound records of observation from the Field newspaper, from that fine observer Gosse, even from the precocious Eton boy, than all the jumble of Pliny's thirty-seven books of untranslatable Natural History.

Hume, the historian—who knew as little of our past social history as Dr. Johnson knew of the two principal languages required for the writer of an English dictionary, Celtic and Saxon—has a foolish and wild statement, which has since passed current as good money among the writers on culinary vegetables. The statement is that, till the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth, carrots, turnips, and salads were unknown in England: Henry's Spanish queen having always, when she wanted a salad, to send couriers to the great gardens of Holland or Flanders. This may be true of lettuces, which first arrived here from Flanders, welcome guests, in 1520. Otherwise, the statement is nonsense. Salads were favourite food in the middle ages, and were much needed to cool the hot wine, the spiced dishes, and the incessant salt meats. Chaucer's men had their sharp winter cresses, their water cresses, their common Alexander, their goat's beard, their rampion, rocket, and borage, their amaranthus and goose foot, their good Henry, their monk's rhubarb, and their pepper-wort.

We will not let the poor creatures be robbed of their salad, even though they are dead and buried.

In all good cooking, vegetables hold a subordinate but still an honoured place. Leeks sodden, and turnips float on our broth, but the French do not use vegetables in so uncouth a way. Suppose we examine some of their savoury and appetising ways of cooking vegetables, and of employing them when cooked. Take *épinard* (spinach), by some considered mere chopped hay, by others prized and valued as the pleasant and most lightsome *matelas* (mattress) for a *fricandeau*, a dish which goes far to remove our insular contempt for what we are pleased to call flimsy and greasy kickshaws (*quelque chose*). Spinach holds a high rank in Paris kitchens, because its soft dark leaves can be gathered for eight or nine out of the twelve months. This vegetable, although so humble, is called by French gourmands, "*le désespoir de l'avarice et de l'industrie*," as its preparation is expensive and difficult. It is like the flint stone in the proverbial soup; it wants so many other ingredients to make it good. It is like virgin wax, it is susceptible of any impression. By itself it is trivial, but in a clever man's hands it becomes a gem of value; so did a shilling's worth of Roman canvas become a sheet of gold under the touch of Raphael. It is wholesome either with gravy, butter, cream, or coulis. It will make soups, tarts, rissoles, or creams. After sorrel it is the best bed upon which a *fricandeau*

can repose, and on its green pulp rests well, both the scarlet tongue and the smoked beef of Hamburg. It is a resource on the poor man's board, it is the glory of the rich man's table; yet its chief value is given it by the hands through which it passes.

The cauliflower is as wholesome as spinach, and requires less talent in the cooking. It is nice with white sauce, and good with mutton gravy; it can be eaten "*frit en pâte*," and it is delicious with parmesan. It serves to garnish ragoûts and it will make a salad of merit. The head must be white, close, and firm.

Ude says that thistles are not much relished in England, "but in France are held in the highest estimation." Thistle is an entremet usually selected by a French chef to try the skill of a new cook. Chardons are delicious stewed with Spanish sauce, and mix well with poached eggs. They are perfect with beef marrow or with white and velouté sauce. The Spanish thistles are the best, being of the artichoke race. A French epicurean writer says "this dish is the *ne plus ultra* of human science, and a cook who can cook thistles well is entitled to rank as the first artist in Europe." Under the old régime, the light of glory shone especially on the powdered wig of the Count de Tesse, first groom of Marie Antoinette. He was lost in the flight of the emigrés, and never came to the surface again. Thistles *en maigre* and *au parmesan* are not difficult to cook, and are extremely good. Persons of inferior genius should endeavour to acquire glory by first cooking their thistles in the humbler styles.

The French consider celery best in salad, and in sharp sauce mixed with Maille or Bordin mustard. It is useful, too, with gravy for braised mutton and large entrées; but the *crème au celeri* is thought a special triumph of the kitchen. The cabbage, despicable only in the eyes of pride, forms a pleasant wall round a rump of beef, and the French sometimes (but with questionable taste) entomb a roast partridge in the same vegetable. A cabbage à la Bavaoise is a favourite mattress for a ragoût. About the beginning of the century, *sauer-kraut*, the natural dish of Germany, borrowed it is supposed from the Turks, became popular in Paris. *Scorzoner* makes an excellent soup when seasoned with parmesan and fried.

We use mushrooms in cooking, nearly as freely as the French, but we cruelly neglect the mushroom's cousin, the little fragile nanken-coloured *champignon*, which is excellent in ragoûts, and serves for half the catsup that is christened *mushroom* in London. The French eat *champignons* greedily, à la *crème*, fried or stewed. They dry them, and preserve them in vinegar. Above all, and this is an excellent hint, they powder them for winter use.

The white haricots—the best come from Soissons—are often used in France as the mattress for a leg of mutton, and very nice they are. There is also a good thick soup to be made of them.

Welcome pleasant April! Thou bringest asparagus. The largest and best in Paris comes from Vendôme. We eat them with melted butter, the French often with oil. They are by no means bad, when small, cut up to resemble green peas. They can be eaten with cream or gravy, and even in omelets; and they are used as garnishing to many sorts of ragoût. Asparagus is the very essence of beatified green buds, and conveys a foretaste of spring to the sensitive palate of the gourmand. Hail, too, gentle May! because, with songs of birds and wandering perfume of flowers, thou givest us green peas, the best, the most inviting, and the most delicate of vegetables. An old French proverb says, "Eat green peas with rich men, and cherries with poor," because peas are best very small and young, and should be gathered on the morning they are to be eaten. It would take a folio volume to describe all the French ways of cooking peas. They make sweet little green beds for cutlets and pigeons; they mix with fricassees, palattes of beef, and calves' ears; in fact, there is no animal, as the *Almanach des Gourmands* eloquently says, which does not feel honoured by their alliance.

French beans (O that some genius would teach us how to preserve them for winter!) are delicious when small and young; but when your fruiterer calls them peculiarly fine, and sells them at so much a hundred, they are only fit to throw on the dust heap. At Lyons, they cook them with chopped onions. They are not bad with sauce poulette—a sauce thickened with yolks of eggs, a little butter, pepper, and salt, and the juice of half a lemon. The Provençal way is with oil and garlic.

When the leaves begin to turn, and autumn scorches the beech leaves a pie-crust colour, we have our consolation in the savoury artichoke. Amiable vegetable! But let us observe that a good artichoke must be young and tender, and one proof of youth is that the stalks must break without being thready. (By-the-by, useful fibrous thread could surely be extracted from this plant when old.) For the fry à la Provençal and à l'Italienne, sprouts of the artichoke are used. An eminent French cook says, "a hedge of artichokes fried of a fine colour and garnished with fried parsley, is one of the most ravishing coups d'œil nature or art can offer as an entremet; to guests who have already eaten too largely, this gentle cousin of the ill-tempered and boorish thistle is wholesome, nourishing, stomachic, and astringent. It is especially suitable for the ordinarily strong brain and weak stomach of men of letters when cooked, but when raw, and eaten à la poivrade, it is a simple poison acid cruelly astringent, and is only fit for the "dura ilia" of navigators, coal whippers, bricklayers, and stokers. The most delicate artichokes in Paris come from Laon; you may know them by their pineapple sort of leaves looking tired and flaccid with the journey. The bigger artichokes are best plain with melted butter or oil, but the small are

chameleons capable of many changes, and are all the better for the encouragement of sauce. They are excellent in the Spanish way or with gravy and verjuice. They are useful in fricassees. They make a good basis for white soup. They fry well. The Provençal way is to eat them with lemon juice or Spanish sauce. Ude recommends saving up artichoke bottoms en canapés, to be served cold for entremets. You first pour on the centre of each white saucer of the *cul d'artichaux*, some anchovy or Montpelier butter, and decorate these cheese cakes of vegetable with capers, slices of beet-root, and pickled cucumbers, and then pour over all some creamy salad sauce garnished with cresses. If a man of taste and sentiment, you will add slips of anchovy, and the whites and yolks of hard boiled eggs. Artichoke bottoms keep for a long time, if properly dried, and are excellent for meat pie, or for garnishing ragoûts.

A certain French genius who never emerged from the kitchen, and there perished in his prime from an unrestrained fondness for green Chartreuse; after describing the five hundred and forty-three ways in which eggs can be cooked in France, writes thus:

"Eggs are the most gracious presents that Divine Providence ever bestowed on man."

What the lover of the liqueur that so much resembles green hair oil, asserts of eggs, we would rather he had applied to vegetables. The French ridicule us for being savagely carnivorous and not diluting our meat with more bread, vegetables, and other anti-putrescents. We laugh at the French for indulging in washy soups and trivial messes. Both nations may be right, and we are inclined to think they are. Our climate requires food to supply muscle and to warm the central furnace of the heart; their climate gives our gay neighbours less appetite for heavy joints. The French are indubitably right in their love of vegetables, which supply valuable properties to the blood, and not only cool but enrich it.

The custom of preserving vegetables in sealed bottles full of vinegar, is very old on the Continent. It was a desperate and clumsy effort to carry the gifts of summer through the snows and rains of winter. They proved man's pluck, but they were for a long time a dreadful failure. The Dutch began with the finest and most delicate vegetables, such as French beans and Windsor beans. *Petits Pois* for cutlets were common in the Paris Halle about 1802, but were generally half fermented, or dry, withered, and sapless. When the war with England came, or in the language of a French culinary writer of eminence, when "English tyranny took possession of the seas and declared war against the commerce of all nations," these luxuries became more necessary. It was at this crisis that a great man arose. M. Appert, of the Rue de la Verrerie, took large gardens at Massey, near Antony, four leagues from Paris, and there devoted his large mind and busy hands to gathering vegetables and potting them

on the spot. He made great improvements in the art of preserving vegetables, and, in the windy language of the day, carried the month of May into the heart of December.

Dr. Kitchener, often eccentric, but always full of shrewd common sense, has left some useful remarks on cooking vegetables, the look and taste of which he truly says, form a great mark of difference between an elegant and an ordinary table. In London, vegetables are apt to be stale, and freshened up with water. They should be nearly full grown, fresh picked, green, and plump. They must soak for an hour after being rinsed, and must be boiled with plenty of water. Every moment's neglect stamps an indelible mark of second class on vegetables. If the boiling have been stopped, they will be brown instead of green. If not taken up at the moment when they sink, they will be dull and dingy. If not well drained, they will be mashy. The quicker they boil, the greener they will be; take care, moreover, to put in the bigger vegetables first; mind that in large cauliflowers the stalk and flower can never both be well cooked; and you will have your vegetable-marrows marrowy, your peas buttery, your broad beans soft, your French beans tender; and your potatoes balls of flour.

And this recalls us to one of the most important branches of the Apician art—the most dangerously simple in appearance, but in reality the most rarely attainable. Was it not Lord Sefton, or some other equally celebrated epicure, who, being on the committee of a club deciding on the choice of a new chef, after the most abstruse subtleties of art had been exhausted, put this simple and staggering question:

“Can you cook a potato?”

Whether the chef fainted or challenged Lord S., tradition—being, indeed, often rather hard of hearing—has not condescended to relate.

But Lord S. was right; no doubt in the mere boiling of a potato the profoundest chemical laws are evolved, and a Faraday might have lectured upon the process as embracing all the mysteries of the kitchen. It involves the discovery of the powers of steam, and the laws of caloric; though all these are known by implication to every good and thoughtful cook. The worst of potato cooking is, that no experience in the art seems to teach it to the ordinary domestic.

Choose your potatoes carefully; the yellow are more worthy than the red, and the red are more worthy than the white. Potatoes are best of a moderate size, without specks, heavy, and clear in the rind. They should not be washed until they are pared and prepared for cooking. Boil, Dr. Kitchener (what a fortunate name for a writer on gastronomy!) says, potatoes of the same size together: otherwise the smaller ones will be boiled to pieces before their larger brethren are softened at the core. Above all things, do not fill your saucepan more than half full; and remember that it is especially important not to put more water than

will cover the potatoes about an inch, so that, allowing for waste in boiling, they may still just be covered.

Set them on a moderate fire till the lid of the saucepan begins to trot and bump; then lift the pot off the fire to the hob, there to simmer as slowly as possible, till the potatoes will admit the prongs of a steel fork. Moderate sized potatoes take about twenty minutes boiling. The cracking of the coats is no proof or their being done, as some potatoes, when boiled too fast, will open before they are half done; when the fork test satisfies you, pour off the water, uncover the saucepan, and set it by the fire for fifteen or twenty minutes, so as to let the moisture pass off in steam. The potatoes will then come to table dry and mealy. This mode Dr. Kitchener much preferred to steaming.

ALONE IN CHAMBERS—THE OLD LATIN GRAMMAR.

My poor old dog's-eared Latin grammar,
Sole relic of my schoolboy years,
When knowledge, like a great sledge-hammer,
Battered my brain amid my tears.
I gaze upon thy woful pages,
And think, remembering parted pain,
That no philosophers or sages
Would like the past to come again.

I know I wouldn't. Greek and Latin
Made misery of my youthful time;
Though mathematics I was pat in,
And not amiss in rhythm and rhyme.
My boyhood's days were days of grief,
My appetite outran my dinner;
And pocket money's scant relief
Still left my appetite the winner.

And then the pangs of hopeless passion,
Which in my burning teens I knew,
Though comic in a certain fashion,
Were bitter sorrows while they grew!
I long'd to leap Time's bars and jailers—
To be my self's own king and lord;
To pass “the Rubicon of tailors,”
And fight the world with pen or sword.

Great were the ambition and the folly
That sent my soul to future days,
Amid a present melancholy,
To seek for glory and its bays.
I thought all pleasures were before me—
Love, Fortune, Fame—all bliss combined.
Poor fool! ere forty years flew o'er me
I'd left the best of them behind.

Still Fortune or its chance is left me,—
My stomach's good, my brain is clear;
My heart is hard, for it bereft me
Of twice five thousand pounds a year.
I might have married all that money,
But chose to wed a poor young maid—
Fair as the morn and sweet as honey,
Who loved me dearly—I'm afraid.

This grammar stirs my soul too sadly!
Go rest, old relic, on the shelf!
I fear my life has passed but badly;
I do not care to know myself.

I've got a chance for Rottenborough;
And if I win—my sun's not set—
I'll aim at public life—go thorough—
Who knows?—I may be Premier yet.

And if I be—a spirit nudges
Close at my elbow—won't I make
Bishops, ambassadors, and judges,
For Glory's or for Mischief's sake?
If not, what matters? Brookes's, Boodle's,
Or other stupid clubs of mine,
Will yield the scornee his old corner,
His dinner, and his pint of wine.

WALKS AND TALKS WITH THE PEOPLE.

NO. II. THE SLOP TAILOR.

ABOUT two years and a half ago, on a breezy morning in June, I indulged in a long day's walk for health and pleasure; on the once great northern road from London. I plodded cheerfully along through the green lanes of Hertfordshire, towards the city of St. Albans, and remembered, as I went, that this comparatively lonely and deserted highway was, in the days before Stephenson, the busiest and most crowded in England; the one on which the greatest number of his Majesty's mail coaches, with their four spanking steeds, their red-coated, and often red-nosed coachmen and guards, and their small complement of passengers outside and inside, the outside the jolliest, bowled pleasantly along at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, and when the passengers thought, if they thought upon the subject at all, that this was the perfection of travelling, and that the wit and ingenuity of man could devise nothing better, swifter, and more commodious. Turning this matter in my mind, and almost regretting that the mathematical discomfort, and dangerous speed of the railway, had driven off all the old stage coaches, and ruined most, if not all, the cozy old inns and hostelries of the way side, I heard the steps of a pedestrian behind me. I slackened my pace and allowed him to overtake me, that I might ascertain whether he were companionable or churlish, whether he were gentle or simple, a sturdy beggar, or a pathetic tramp who meditated an appeal to my pocket. He was a man of about five-and-thirty; looked sickly and sallow, and half starved; and was respectably dressed like a working man, wore thick-soled shoes, and carried a stout stick in his hand, and a small bundle on his back. I saw at a glance that he was not a loiterer, or one bound on a short errand, but that his walk was to be a long one. Judging from something slouching and awkward in his gait, as well as from his small hands, his somewhat effeminate appearance, and his air of thoughtful melancholy, I made up my mind that he must be either a shoemaker or a tailor. Somehow or other, the members of these two useful handicrafts have always a serious and meditative look. Their occupation gives them no food for the mind; and they think over their

work, or think that they are thinking, which comes to about the same thing with the great majority of people. I was not deceived in this man's occupation, for he turned out to be a slop tailor; and a person of considerable determination and independence of character. After the usual interchange of words—they need not be called ideas—about the weather, the state of the road, and the aspect of the country through which we were passing, I learned by degrees, as we trudged along together, the story of his life and sorrows, his trials and privations, and his hopes of a better future.

His elder brother, a wild, restless, and enterprising youth, had gone to sea twenty-five years previously, and had unexpectedly prospered in America. After many ups and downs, and trials of various modes of life, he found himself in possession of a good farm in Wisconsin, and had sent to England, and lodged in a bank at Liverpool, a sum sufficient to pay his younger brother's expenses and those of his wife and three children, from London to the Far West; including an extra ten-pound note for unforeseen contingencies.

"You may guess," said my companion, whom I shall take the liberty in these pages of calling Mr. Crump, "how glad I was to receive such glorious news, and to have such a splendid offer, and the ready money into the bargain. I could only touch the odd ten pounds of the money, which I did two days ago. I have given seven pounds to 'the old woman,' to pay off a few small debts, take leave of her friends and relations, and come down with the children, third-class, to Liverpool, in a fortnight, when the ship sails in which our passage is taken; and have kept three pounds for myself. I shall walk to Liverpool, rain or shine; unless I fall ill by the road, when I shall have to be sent on by rail. This, however, I don't expect, as I am not weakly by nature; and the fresh air and the sight and smell of the fields will do me good. I have sat cross-legged on a bench for so many years, making slop trousers and vests, for Aaron and Co., that I want to take the cramp out of my bones, and to feel that I am a man, and not a sewing machine. I have worked and toiled for more than twenty years, and for twelve hours a day, in close rooms, and stinking alleys, more than half-starved, all the time; and I feel that this kindness of my brother has snatched me out of the very jaws of despair and death, and enabled me for the first time in my life to feel that I am of as much account in the world as a sparrow on the tiles, or the cat that tries to gobble it up."

"Are you able, do you think, not being accustomed to walking, to walk all the way to Liverpool in a fortnight, without being foot sore?"

"I am foot sore already. Better be foot sore than heart sore. I did fifteen miles yesterday, my first day on the road, I shall do twenty or twenty-four to-day, and as many to-morrow, if all goes well."

"Twenty miles a day are fair enough walk-

ing for a continuance. If you walk twenty miles a day for fourteen days, you make two hundred and eighty in a fortnight. You have time to spare and can take things leisurely. But will three pounds carry you through?"

"Like a prince! Three pounds for a fortnight! why that makes thirty shillings a week! and for twenty years my wages, working like a slave, have not been above fourteen shillings a week; when I was younger only ten or eleven."

"Did you work your whole time for this pittance? or did you take St. Monday, and half of Saturday, as holidays?"

"I had no holiday. There was no blue Monday for me. Every day was alike, twelve hours', sometimes fourteen hours' work, and Saturday was just like any other. Some of my mates worked half the Sunday, too, to screw up their earnings to fifteen shillings. But I never did."

"Why not? Have you any objection to Sunday work?" I put this question thinking that, for the first time in my life, I had fallen in with a specimen of that very rare bird, on English earth, a church-going London mechanic.

"I had very great objections."

"Were they serious?"

"Very serious."

"Religious?"

"Well! I'm not very sure. I think not. Six days' work in a week are sufficient for any man; and I like my Sunday's rest, and enjoy it."

"For the sake of going to church?"

"Church be —!" Well, I cannot write his vulgar and obscene anathema. I pressed my question a little further. "If you don't go to church—why don't you? Do you prefer chapel? Or, if you neither go to church nor chapel, how do you employ the day of rest?"

"I don't go either to church or chapel, because I would rather read a book than listen to a sermon; and because the preachers tell me nothing that satisfies my reason, or comforts my soul—if I've got a soul. I don't go because I can't fee the pew-opener to give me a seat. I don't go because I don't think that I or any other poor man should be put in a place apart in God's own house, and marked as a pauper in a building, when the preacher tells us that we are all equal; or tells us sometimes that the poor are to be better off in the next world than the rich. Lazarus, you know, went to heaven and Dives to the other place. And, besides, Sunday is my only day for a little fresh air; and I like to go into the fields and lay on my back in the grass, if it does not rain, thankful to God, in my misery, that I can look up to the sky, and think of him as my Heavenly Father."

I did not like to press Mr. Crump much further on this point, though he was communicative enough, as will be seen, and might have thrown some light upon the theology of the poor, and shown where and how the church and the chapel fail to reach the classes below that of the small shop-keepers. I ventured on only one more question

"Do you understand the doctrine preached in church or chapel, if you ever go to either?"

"I understand as much as this—that I don't believe in the doctrine; or, at all events, that I believe in very little of it. I believe in the Rise of Man, not in the Fall of Man. It seems to me, and I have thought a good deal more on such subjects than you might imagine, that man has never yet had fair play in the world; and that the only place where he is likely to get it is in America."

My new friend, as will be seen, was an "advanced Thinker," and appeared, as far as I could judge, by his answers to my remarks, as well as to my questions, to have thought out these matters for himself, with the aid of hints in the newspapers. But he suddenly seemed to grow suspicious of me on this subject, as if he had a misgiving that I was a clergyman in disguise, or was going to inveigle him into a theological argument; so I dropped the subject, and gradually put him at his ease, which I did over a crust of bread and cheese and a glass of ale at a public-house parlour in St. Albans.

"How could you manage to keep a wife and three children on fourteen shillings a week?" I inquired, as we resumed our walk.

"Keep them! I couldn't keep them—though some people have to keep a wife and half a dozen children on the money. We lived in rags and misery, and had not half enough to eat. We had but a single back room; it was kitchen, parlour, bedroom, and workshop, all in one; and we only had a glimpse of sunlight on the tiles for a couple of hours a day. My wife earned a little at shirt making, about three or four shillings, that paid the rent and helped us along a little. She is a sober woman, and works as well as she can—never drinks anything but tea or coffee, and a little beer on the Sunday. If she had taken to gin, as many poor women do, I should have been in the workhouse or the madhouse, most likely."

"Had you butcher's meat for a portion of your diet?"

"Not what *you* would call butcher's meat, but we got something that answered the purpose; the rind of ham from the ham and beef shops, that they sell with odds and ends of skin and fat at threehalfpence a pound, and that makes tolerably good soup, with the aid of pepper and salt and a little rice and onions. Then we had beef bones to boil down into broth, with barley or rice. But it was a constant struggle to get bread enough for the children. Butter we never saw or tasted; and milk was not often within our means. Sometimes, in Whitechapel, where we lived, there was a glut of herrings or mackerel—three for a penny sometimes—and then we had a feast. Sprats, also, were sometimes the cheapest and the best food in the market—a slap-up luxury for the poor, I can tell you."

"Do you smoke?"

"No, thank Heaven! the smell of tobacco is disagreeable to me; and sometimes when I have been in company with half a dozen smokers in

the beer-shop at the corner of our alley, I have felt a cold sweat break out all over me, and rushed outside to avoid fainting. Why tobacco should serve me so, when other people enjoy it so much, I cannot tell; but it has been all the better for the old woman and the brats that I spent no money upon *that*. Some of my mates, who work for the same shop as I did, spend as much as ninepence a week on the filthy stuff. Ninepence a week would buy two loaves of bread, or half a pound of coffee. So my ninepence a week was well saved. And it is not only the beastly tobacco that costs money; it is the extra drink that goes along with it. And this makes the men sometimes beat their wives, or otherwise renders their homes miserable. Home is miserable enough, if it is but one dark room, full of squalling brats, without a drunken man, or, what is still worse, a drunken woman, in it, to make it a hell upon earth. I don't want to praise myself, but I do think my dislike of tobacco—or the dislike of tobacco to me—has made me a better man than I might have been otherwise. My mates often joke and jeer me for not smoking. Once, being foolhardy, I blew a few whiffs of a pipe that was offered me, and was as brave as a dragoon over it for about a minute and a half. It was the last time, and it's going to be the last time, if I live till I'm a hundred."

"What happened?"

"I was sick—sick to death—and it served me right. My mate thought I never would recover, and vowed never to offer a pipe again to anybody as long as he lived."

"Have you made up your mind what you are going to do in Wisconsin?"

"I'll do anything. Work on my brother's farm—dig the ground, cut down trees, feed the pigs—anything. Or I'll set up in my own business. It's a great business now, you know, in America since Johnson became President. Why people should laugh at tailors, as if their trade were not as good as any other, I have never been able to understand. Nobody laughs at a saddler, who makes, as I may say, clothes for horses, and yet they laugh at tailors, who make clothes for men—nobler animals, I take it, than horses."

"I imagine that the idea took its rise in warlike times, when men were wanted for fighting, and when none but women used the needle. Consequently, a tailor was supposed to do women's work."

"Possibly," said Mr. Crump; "and I for one would not be sorry if none but women did the tailoring of all the world. Still, I don't see why tailors, as I said, are not to be considered as good as saddlers, or shoemakers, or hatters, or glovemakers, or stocking-manufacturers. Nobody laughs at *them*. And as for the talk of its taking nine tailors to make a man, it is my opinion that it would take nine ordinary men to make one such tailor as Andrew Johnson. He don't allow the trade to be laughed at. He confesses he was a tailor, and glories in the fact."

"It shows his good sense not to be ashamed of his trade; but I do not see why he should glory in it."

"Why not?" said Mr. Crump. "The trade is as good as any other, and is the oldest in the world. Look here," he continued, "at a paragraph I cut out of a newspaper." Fumbling in his pocket, he brought out an old purse, and drew from it a scrap of print, which he handed me to read. It was the account of an interview of an American politician with President Johnson, in which the latter declared to his visitor that tailoring was the oldest of all the arts of civilisation; but that Adam and Eve were not competent to excel in it until a divine hand showed them the material on which they should work."

Mr. Johnson was reported in the paragraph to have said that, "immediately after the Fall, when our first parents first discovered that they were naked, they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons—poor stuff that would not hold together. But did they invent anything better? Not they. It needed the teaching of Heaven to put them on the right track."

When I had read it, and returned the paper to Mr. Crump, he put it carefully into his purse again, saying, "I borrowed a Bible when I first saw this; that I might understand exactly what the President meant, and I found in the third chapter of Genesis, verse the twenty-first, the words, which I got by heart. 'Unto Adam also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.' Adam and Eve, you see, only knew how to make fig-leaf aprons. The Almighty himself made the coats of skins for them, and taught Adam to be a tailor."

"You have had some education yourself, Mr. Crump: have you given your children any?"

"My education has been very poor and irregular, and amounts to little more than reading. I write badly; but still I *can* write, and can cypher as far as the Rule of Three. My father was able to send me to a day school till I was eleven or twelve years old. I have not been able to do as much for my children, but on wet Sundays, when I could not get out into the fields, I have taught my little boys to read. And when I get to Wisconsin they will be able to go to school. That's the country for me, where every child is taught, not by charity, but by right. That's the system I like. That's the country for my money!"

"But surely there are some schools in White-chapel, where you could have sent your children if you had chosen?"

"Yes; charity schools, ragged schools, and such like; but poor as I am, I don't like charity. I want justice, and though my children *are* ragged, worse luck, I don't want anybody to call them ragged. I've got some pride in me, though I *am* only a tailor; but if my children had a right to their education, as children have in America, they should have gone to school, ragged or not ragged; but at all events as

neatly dressed as I could manage to make them."

I passed the whole day and walked more than twenty miles in Mr. Crump's company; and before we parted, when I wished him a very cordial farewell, gave him my name and address, and extracted a promise that after he had got to Wisconsin and settled down in his new home, he would write to me and let me know whether he liked the country and had prospered in it. He kept his promise, and less than six months ago, I heard from him that he was both a gardener and a tailor; and had far more to do than his hands could accomplish. His earnings were more in one day than they had been in London in a week. His boys not only went to school, but one of them worked in the garden and the other in the shop. He had butcher's meat every day, not alone for dinner, but for breakfast. His wife had a silk gown, a watch, and a gold chain, and had nothing to do but to attend to her family, which had increased since they settled in Wisconsin. He told me that his last new comer, a boy, born on American soil, would be eligible to the Presidency if he lived long enough, and had a chance of nomination, and that out of respect to the actual President and his former business, the child was named Andrew Johnson Crump. Mr. Crump it will be seen was altogether an exceptional slop tailor. He was so satisfied with America that he and his wife were saving up a few pounds to send over to England to help her brother and his family over, as he and she had been helped; and if Mr. Crump lives long enough, there is no doubt in my mind, from what I know of his character, that he will be as good as his word.

FAR WESTERN MAN.

THE far Western American settlements of Great Britain and the United States yield us, in odd freedom from conventionalities of life and off-hand settlement of difficulties, much matter for laughter, but none for ridicule. There is a grandeur of its own in human energy that not only conquers land and wealth to the use of mankind, but proves the inner soundness of the stuff men are made of, by conquering also the bad passions of life. In regions to which lawless men are tempted, by the absence of all civilised machinery of law, the rascals are at last compelled to stand in awe of honest men. Throughout the Far West tracks of travel have been cleared of the white robber and assassin, and are safe except here and there from the hostility of native tribes. Property lying exposed to theft is, in many a new Western settlement, safer than in one of the towns of the old country. Public opinion has condemned the gambler, and condemns the idler. The foundations of a new society laid thus in the Far West, however rough they may appear, are strong and sound, and it is wonderful to see how fast the well proportioned building rises from them. Races of North and South join in

the West, and do their pioneer work in a practical hard-headed way; parted, no doubt, from some of the advantages, but also from all the overgrown hypocrisies of civilisation. I look with respect even upon "whittling," as a symptom of the restless desire to be doing as well as talking. In the North Pacific, where there are such extensive forests and odd pieces of wood are lying handy, whittling seems to be the regular occupation of men's idle hours.

The municipality of San Francisco put up wooden posts to protect the side walks from fiery charioteers. Over these hung knots of eager disputants, and as mining stocks and swamp lands were being discussed, they whittled at the posts, until they became so thin that the wind blew them over. I have seen a man in a backwood church begin whittling the wood of the pew. At a trial in Grass Valley, each jurymen began whittling at a piece of wood he had brought in his pocket for the purpose, regulating the energy of the action by the clearness of the evidence. The trial lasted through a second day, but as they had not expected a long sitting nobody had brought enough wood with him, and accordingly the benches suffered. First the gentlemen of the jury attacked that portion of the seat which showed between their legs, until it had assumed a vandyke collar-like form, and the assault on the other portion had proceeded so far when the judge finished his charge, that he made a calculation, that if the ends of justice had required the jury to sit for a third day there would have been nothing left for them to sit on.

Old skippers hang about the wharf also whittling. At Coose Bay there are only two marriageable girls, and these being run after by all the young men of the district, value themselves accordingly. Half a dozen Oregonian youths sit on the verandah in front of their respective houses during the whole of Sunday, while each lady looks out at her followers through the half-opened window. The lovers all the while are whittling bits of white pine, which is an easy wood to work, and valued for that purpose. At dark they move home, but the damsels find these visits profitable, for there is generally left behind a pile of shavings big enough to light fires for the rest of the week.

The Western man is a being of versatile genius. If he cannot succeed in one profession he will turn to another. There are plenty of lawyers who are miners, and merchants who are doctors all over the North-West. The head of the largest mercantile firm on the Pacific Coast, is one who was educated for, and practised many years in, the medical profession; and some of the most adroit politicians and "wire pullers," are styled "Doctor" from having at one time been in the same way in life. If one trade does not pay he commences in another, and if there is not an opening in Bullet City, he "vamooses the ranch," "makes tracks," or "gets up and gits" for Ground-Hogs-Glory, where there is said to be an excellent opening for either a butcher, or a lawyer,

or a tavern-keeper. He will establish himself in one or other of these callings, probably to "bust up," or to make two hundred and fifty thousand dollars—he is always going to make just that particular sum. He knows thoroughly that art, without which no new country can grow great—the noble art of "coming down." Generals and brigadier-generals of the great civil war are earning honest bread by industry.

The dashing cavalry leader to whom the young ladies wrote poems, is in the grocery trade at Chicago. One famous officer has gone back to the plough, another is a newspaper reporter, another is writing a History of Texas, while practising law and photography. The photography pays best, for he has a contrivance of his own for giving the Mexicans a very pale picture, which is said to suit them exactly, as they have a desire to appear as white as possible. Of such stock comes the true Western Pioneer. Notwithstanding the banter about his being so long in the legs and short in the body, that a hat and a pair of trousers make a good suit of clothes for him, he is a stalwart sinewy fellow, infinite of resource, rough in his talk, with little learning and no formal piety. Ready to work, no matter how often fortune defeats him, he is ever hopeful of "wrestling through somehow." A peculiar character has grown up in the valley of the Mississippi, which may be called the Western character. From the Mississippi it has spread, and is daily spreading more and more to Columbia. It is the out-growth of all circumstances surrounding it, including climate and soil, and the mingling of bloods. It tends to individualism, freedom, self-reliance, and large views; there is little of narrow sectarianism in its secular life or religion; little provincialism, that is to say, little of the prejudice that lives on for generations in an untravelling community.

The Western character develops freedom and takes in large calculations. This is more true of the man of Western cities, than of the farmer and the frontier-man, but still the character applies to all. A Western man thinks nothing of going one thousand or one thousand five hundred miles, and has no traditional feud with any class of Jew or Gentile. The elements of various nationalities flowing together Westward form a strong and tolerant community. If a man out West has his horse stolen, he mounts another and traces the thief; shoots him if he can. The extending prairies, immense lakes, grand rivers, seem to enlarge the whole conception of things. The big farm yields thousands of bushels of grain. The Western man may have twenty horses, a hundred mules, and a thousand head of cattle grazing in his pastures, and five hundred pigs fattening in his fields. He reads the price currents; knows all that is going on; forms his own opinions, and is loud and bold in the expression of them. He is a man of patient courage, who will lose thousands of dollars by the fall of the market, and make less account of it than he would of the laming of a favourite

horse, or the loss of a faithful dog. If he doesn't turn his loss off with a laugh, and is pushed to speak of it, you may see the gleam of stern grit flashing from his eyes, as he tells you he will do better next time. He is full of reckless and mercurial daring. As impulsive as the Southerner, and yet practical in all things, he sees and takes always the short cut to his end. Feeling about the sacred character of ancestral acres never disturbs the mind of a man whose possessions were reclaimed from the wilds but yesterday, and may be left to-morrow. Whatever he has he will sell; and whatever you own he is willing to buy, providing he can make some "boot" on it. With him all things were made to buy and sell. A frontier man once described to me without the least idea of the strange character of the transaction, how he had "traded off a bible for a plaguey good fiddle." If anything you have on you, or about you strike his fancy, he will at once offer to buy it, and has no notion that certain pieces of property mayn't be for sale. My own experience has lain chiefly among the vanguard of these pioneers, the frontier man who paves the way for others less able or willing to cope with fortune; less traders than labourers upon the land. These are the people who are fast filling up with stern prose of the plough and the reaping machine, and the whistle of steam, what was once claimed by the pleasant poetry of the songs of the voyageur, the *coureur des bois*, and the hunters and trappers of the great Fur Companies. But perhaps it is better after all? Much as I have lived with the frontier man, I have grown in liking for the pioneer who is always "moving West."

Hailing generally from some border state, early in life, he has settled down on some "donation" claim. Making it his boast that he is "half horse, half alligator, wi' a touch uv the snappin' turtle," he soon has a good farm about him, and remains until, by the miserable style of agriculture learned in the cotton lands of the Mississippi, he exhausts the soil; or until he considers himself inconveniently crowded, upon hearing that he has got a neighbour eight miles off, and "more a comin'." Then he "kalk'lates he'll move West;" and is not long before he "guess he'll locate"—still on the frontier in some Little Big Snipe Swamp, or Dead Indian Prairie. And there he does "locate," until the old causes operating, or his land becoming valuable, he sells out to some less enterprising settler, hitches up his old bullock team once more, and with his loose cattle, his horses, his long Kentucky rifle, his Douglas axe, his copper camp-kettle, and his long-handled frying-pan, off he goes. Not forgetting his bouncing "gals," who rightly boast that they can "lick their weight in wild cats," his four stalwart sons, each of whom can shoot the bristles off a wolf and drive a furrow so straight that, as they tell you, if followed up, it would "knock the centre out'er the north star, colonel," he moves, and moves, still West. Rumbling every summer over the great Plains go hundreds of such

teams and many such men, each fighting his way among Sioux, and Blackfoot, and Snake, until we find him in Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, or Washington territory, and possibly he even roams down, open mouthed in his wonder, to "Californy." But this part of the world is generally too civilised for him, and the polished Californians are not kindly affected to the individual in buckskin or homespun, whom they profanely style the "yallar-bellied Missourian."

The pioneer of pioneers must have been one Jedediah S. Smith (called "Jed" for shortness), who, on the 20th of December, 1826, strayed too far into the Great Desert, and from want of provision and water to get home with, was compelled to push forward. It therefore stands upon record as one of the many triumphs of the Smith family, that one of them was the first to make the overland trip from the "States" to California. Fortunately Jedediah found American shipmasters from Boston and Nantucket who vouched for his honest intentions and perfect harmlessness. He had attempted, during the latter part of the preceding winter to make his way up the Columbia River, but the snow was so deep on the mountains that he was obliged to return. Being informed by one of the Christian Indians that the father would like to know who he was, Jedediah wrote a letter to Father Duran, who lived at San Jose, in which he honestly confessed that he was destitute of clothing and most of the necessaries of life, that his horses had perished for want of food and water, that his object was to trap for beavers and furs, and in conclusion he signed himself, "Your strange but real friend and christian brother." Jed has been followed since then by many thousands, scattered now along the frontier. Among them it was my pleasant lot to wander many a day, and if they were queer fellows, they were good fellows; of more use to the world, I think, than many a fine gentleman who has never lifted heavier tool than an opera-glass, or served his country with a stroke of thought.

NO COMMUNICATION.

We were closely packed (in number, thirteen of us) in the middle compartment of a second-class carriage on the Midland line, some two years ago. Our carriage was the centre carriage of a long train, and the compartments on either side were empty. The journey, from Bedford to London, was express, the pace near fifty miles an hour. We had stopped at only one little station, and we were now off on a clear run of forty miles, to be done in ten minutes under the hour, without stoppage. The oil-lamp in the roof of the carriage, flickered pale and wan in the broad daylight—for it was noontide—and in the glass cup beneath, a spoonful of oil wagged and joggled and lurches about with the motion. The company was monotonous and taciturn. Being wedged in

the middle of the seat between two gentlemen of enormous proportions, where it was impossible to command a window, I took to looking at this drop of wagging oil as the only available object that kept time to the jolting and swaying and clatter of the train. Although watching the drop of oil intently, and noting the lively interest it seemed to evince in our progress—leaping forward as we ran whish-sh past a station, or vibrating as cr-r-r-sh-shoot we shot by another train—I was aware of the wainscotted woodwork round it and the painted oak shingle that seemed to dance and quiver with our motion. I saw it without looking at it. What surprised and puzzled me, however, was this: my eyes told me the pattern of the wainscot was changing. New shingle seemed to rise up and swallow up the old, and then the whole appeared to rise and fall in tiny waves. The solution my mind suggested was, that I had bioligised my sight, the oil-lamp serving as a disc.

My fellow-passengers began to talk. I heard them, my eyes were still fastened on the jolting drop of oil, which was beating time to a tune that engine, carriages, and rails, were playing in my head.

"Anybody smoking?" a deep voice said, snappishly.

It seemed there was not.

"Then something is burning," another voice said.

"It's only the guard putting the breaks on," some one else explained.

I knew this was not so; our pace was unchanged; we had thirty more miles to run before the breaks would be put on. I saw why the pattern on the wainscot changed. The paint rose up in great blisters, and the smell of burning paint became powerful. The roof was on fire! Fearing to alarm the rest by an outcry, I momentarily scanned the faces of the passengers, who were loudly complaining of the smoke. I was trying to find a face that had a quiet spirit of help in it. I saw in the corner a calm-faced man of thirty, caught his eye, and pointed to the roof; for his was the only face in which I had confidence. I was right.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, addressing the passengers and pointing; "it is there—the lamp; it has just caught the woodwork a trifle; there is no danger; I am an engineer, and will stop the train."

Looking up, we all saw a brown blistered cloud spreading over the roof, and heard the hissing and crackling of burning wood. The carriage quickly filled with smoke and became very hot; for the fire was fanned by a fifty-mile-an-hour blast.

"Do as I do," the engineer-passenger called to me, flinging me his railway key.

I got to one door, and opened it, as he had done the other. Leaning out of the carriage, the engineer-passenger then gave a long shrill whistle, produced with two fingers against his teeth, harsh and grating almost as a railway whistle. I imitated him as I best could, and by incessantly slamming the doors on both sides

we kept up such a tattoo as one would have thought could not fail to attract the attention of the guard, or the driver, or both. But five minutes passed, and we had not even made ourselves heard in the next carriage. Meantime tongues of fire were darting through the roof, and the volumes of hot pungent smoke became almost insupportable. The rest of the passengers appeared utterly bewildered; crouching together on the floor and against the draught of the doorways for air, feebly crying at intervals, "We are on fire!" "Fire!" "We shall be burned alive!" Two wished to jump out and risk certain destruction rather than burning or suffocation; but we kept the doors.

The engineer made a good captain; he found them something to do. "Use your voices, then," he cried; "shout away, but altogether. Now!" And every one shouted "Fire!" with a will, and we resumed banging the doors. We had made ourselves heard at last in the next carriage, but the occupants were powerless to help us, and did not even know the cause of our dismay. As to communicating with the guard, it was simply hopeless.

Ten minutes had gone since first we saw the roof blister. We had twenty good miles to run, and the daggers of flame were leaping far down from the roof.

"Don't be afraid," said the engineer; "if we can't get the guard to help us, we'll help ourselves."

He tied handkerchiefs to umbrellas and sticks, and gave them to two passengers to wave out of window to attract attention at the next station we shot past; some one might see our condition, and telegraph on to stop us by signal. At least, it would serve to keep the passengers quiet by finding them employment, which was a great point. Then he said, turning to me:

"Whatever is the cause of the fire, it is something *on* the roof, and not the roof itself. Will you climb the roof on one side, while I do the same the other? Only mind and get up to windward to clear the flames."

We each set a foot on the door-rail, caught hold of the luggage-rod and swung ourselves up on the roof that was dashing along and pitching and tossing like a wild thing in a whirlwind. We could only kneel, for the rush of wind at the pace we were going would have carried us away had we stood up. The crash, the rattle, the swaying, the cutting draught, and the arches we shot through, that seemed to strike us on the head and make us cower down as we flashed by, the dazzling rails and the swift sleepers flying past in a giddy cloud, took my breath for the moment. But the engineer was busy cutting adrift, with his pocket-knife, a flaming pile of tarpaulins which the lamp had kindled, and which the wind was now drifting away in great pieces of fire along the line. I helped him with my knife and hands, and between us we quickly had the worst of the burning mass over in the six-foot way.

The roof however was still burning badly, the fire eating out a large hole with red and angry edges that flickered fiercely in the draught. With the aid of bits of the unburnt tarpaulins, we managed to rub these edges and stifle and smother out the worst of the fire, until the occupants of the carriage had really very little to fear.

Whether the guard or engine-driver observed us on the carriage roof and so pulled up the train, or whether the handkerchief signals of distress were seen at some station whence the station-master telegraphed to a signalman to stop the express, I never ascertained; but as soon as the fire was well-nigh subdued, the train slackened and stopped. And I well remember that while the officials were busily engaged in drenching the now empty carriage with buckets of water, a director, who happened to be in an adjoining carriage, very severely reprimanded us for what he told us was an indictable offence, namely, leaving a train in motion. As we stood there with blackened faces and black blistered hands, it scarcely occurred to us to make the obvious defence that, in an isolated compartment, without any possible means of communication with the guard, we had had no alternative but to choose between burning, and breaking the company's rules. I do not know the engineer-passenger, and I have never seen him since, or I would have exchanged congratulations with him on the company's having had the merciful consideration not to take proceedings against us.

BUONAPARTE THE HAPPY.

ABOUT eight miles from Florence, and situated on the brow of a high and wooded hill, is the town of St. Casciano, in a small street of which is the celebrated inn of the Campana, where Machiavel lived, and on the threshold of which, he used to be seen in his wooden shoes and peasant's suit, asking various travellers the news from their countries, or playing, laughing, and disputing with the landlord, the miller, or the butcher. The great author might be seen pruning the lime twigs in the morning, or superintending the cutting down of trees, and thus occupying himself with the things of common life—to calm, as he used to say, the effervescence of his brain. About twenty miles further on, is Certaldo, which boasts of giving birth to Boccaccio, though he was born at Paris, but lived a long time at Certaldo, and died there.

Between these towns, rendered illustrious by the memory of these two great men, is a little unknown hamlet, situated in the midst of a smiling valley. It has a church of no renown, and bare of art.

In the year 1807, there was a curé living here, called Buonaparte. He was poor and obscure, as if one of his name had never caused the Pope to leave the Vatican to crown him at Notre Dame, of Paris. He was mild and un-

ambitious, as if he were not the uncle of Letitia, and the great-uncle of the young general who had conquered Italy, saluted the Pyramids, and made and unmade kings in Europe. The curé, in the parsonage garden, was another Alcinous, training his vines around the five or six elms that grew on the little domain, and he wore, like the father of Ulysses, a tattered cloak and mended shoes. All the noise that his great-nephew was making in the world, passed over his head, without his hearing or heeding it.

No one in the neighbourhood suspected who he was; he had forgotten Corsica to remember only his parishioners, who were as simple and ignorant as himself. His gun, which he sometimes took out with him, provided his table with game; and in his little parlour were rods for fishing. These amusements, added to the cultivation of a few flowers, and the collection of tithes twice a year, were the temporal occupations of the worthy Buonaparte. As to his spiritual duties, he never made any innovations, but read the mass twice a week, and preached every Sunday after vespers.

There were, however, three objects which occupied the attention of the good priest more particularly than his other parishioners; they were a young girl, a youth, and a tame white hen. He had baptised and catechised the girl Mattea, and observed her growing youth and beauty with innocent pleasure; her beautiful dark eyes, graceful figure, and simple artless manners were admired by all. She was the pride of the village. The good man was constantly thinking of her future prospects, and had arranged a suitable match for her with Tommaso, his sacristan. He was a tall fine young man, and a constant guest at the presbytery; he was the priest's factotum; he worked in the garden, cooked, served at mass, chanted in the choir, ornamented the altars, and was chief butler at home. He was a good fellow, though rather noisy, and always the first and the most ardent in the village quarrels.

Such was the suitor whom Buonaparte had chosen for his young protégée, and Tommaso loved her devotedly.

The good curate was living peaceably and happily among his flock and the two or three beings he especially loved, when one day an unaccustomed sound was heard in the village, horses' hoofs clattered on the stones, and the quiet court of the curacy was filled with a troop of cavalry. One of the emperor's officers, covered with gold lace, and with a plume of white feathers in his hat, dismounted, entered the modest parlour, and presented himself before the curé. The good man, trembling, rose, offered him a chair, and stood with hands crossed meekly on his breast, uncertain what martyrdom might be in store for him.

"Compose yourself, sir," said the general, "compose yourself, I beg. Is your name Buonaparte, and are you the uncle of Napoleon, emperor of the French, and king of Italy?"

"Yes, sir," murmured the curate, who had a confused idea of the fortune of his great-nephew, but who regarded it as one of those far-off things from which he was separated by several countries and an immeasurable distance.

"His majesty's mother," continued the officer.

"Letitia!" interrupted the curé.

"Madame has spoken of you to his majesty," rejoined the general.

"To little Napoleon?" said the curate.

"To the emperor, sir. It is not suitable that so near a relative of his majesty, and one of your excellent character, should languish unknown in a poor living, while his family is governing Europe, while your nephew, reverend sir, is filling the world with his fame. The emperor has sent me to you; you have only to speak, you have only to express a wish, and it shall be executed. What episcopal seat tempts you? Would you like a bishopric in France, or in Italy? Will you exchange your black cassock for a cardinal's purple cloak? The emperor bears you too much friendship and respect to refuse you anything."

Now the greatest personage whom the poor curé had ever seen in his life was the Bishop of Fiesole, who came to the village once a year to confirm the little boys and girls. After the episcopal visit the good man was usually dazzled and bewildered for a fortnight, by the remembrance of the fisherman's ring, the golden mitre, and the lace sleeves.

He hesitated a moment to collect his thoughts, and then said: "Is all this true, sir? Is my niece, Letitia, an empress? And to think that I heard her first confession! It was a long time ago—when she was a little girl!"

The general smiled.

"Allow me, sir," continued the curé, "to think for a moment; one must reflect a little before one changes one's position so suddenly."

The general awaited the orders of the pastor, who left the parlour and went upstairs into a little room, the window of which looked on the court.

All was tumult and confusion there; the general's escort had taken off their horses' bridles, and the soldiers were smoking and laughing amongst themselves. Mattea, concealed in a corner, was considering this novel sight with astonishment, while Tommaso was amusing himself by examining the swords and brilliant uniforms, and the white hen was running screaming and scared about the horses' feet.

Mattea's eyes gradually became familiarised with what she saw, and a dragoon, having remarked the young girl, approached and commenced a conversation with her. He was young, handsome, and gallant; Mattea was a little coquette, and not at all in love with the man whom her godfather had destined for her. What the young dragoon said, we know not; but it is certain that when Tommaso went to speak to Mattea, she sent him away, reminding him that it was twelve o'clock, and time for

him to go and ring the Angelus. Tommaso, whose jealousy was already roused by his dashing rival in his brilliant uniform, flew into a passion, and would not stir from the spot; on which the dragoon took him by the ear, twirled him round and round, and sent him flying amid a group of his comrades.

"And is it you, you great booby," said one of the soldiers, "who ring the Angelus here, and respond to the curate's paternosters, instead of being a man and serving the emperor? You will be in a good position, sapristi, when you are promoted to be beadle of this wretched village! Believe us, my lad. Leave your belfry and come with us. We will give you a handsome uniform, a long sword, and a fine horse."

"Is it that girl who keeps you here?" said another of the troop, pointing to Mattea, who was in a corner of the court-yard, in earnest conversation with her new admirer. "Is it that girl who keeps you here? Look at her well, she doesn't care for you, she likes the soldier. Look at her!"

During this time, a fat dragoon, whose rations no doubt did not suffice him, was chasing the curate's fowls about, and the white hen was vainly endeavouring to escape from her tormentor.

"Mattea! Go home to your mother directly," cried the curé from the upper window. "Dragoon! Please to let that fowl alone!"

The feeble voice of the curé had not the power of Napoleon's. The soldier continued to talk to the girl, and the fat dragoon continued to chase the white hen. Tommaso was stroking the croup of a saddle with one hand whilst the other was playing with a sword-handle. At last the assiduous dragoon went to fetch his horse, and sprang on it with one bound; then giving both hands to Mattea, he placed her on the saddle behind him, and without any respect for the curé or his house, set spurs to the animal and disappeared with the Italian girl. At the same moment the other dragoon caught the white hen!

"Mattea! Mattea! Oh! my poor Bianca! Dragoon! put down that fowl!" cried the poor curé with a trembling voice.

Tommaso, hearing his master's agitated exclamations, ran to the rescue of the hen; the poor fellow, not being able to save his sweetheart, did all he could to save Bianca.

Buonaparte left his room and came down to rejoin the general. The poor man was pale and trembling.

"What is the matter, monsignor?" said the general. "What can have agitated you thus?"

"My lord," replied the curé, in a melancholy tone; "my god-daughter, my dear Mattea, is taken off by one of your men."

"What! A young girl taken away from the house of the emperor's uncle! The fellow shall be punished; he shall be shot this very hour! Hollo! Brigadier! which of your men has been guilty of this crime?"

"Let no blood be spilled, I beseech you, general; let no blood be spilled; but if he be a good man, let him marry Mattea."

There had been no violence or crime. The Florentine Helen had suddenly become fascinated, and had gone off of her own accord with her Paris, who was a good soldier, and had been selected to have the cross of the legion of honour.

"He shall marry her. I will answer for that," said the general.

The curé was looking about him in a timid kind of way, seeking his favourite hen, but the severity of the general, who had spoken of shooting Mattea's lover, checked him. He would not compromise a man's life for the love of a fowl. Suddenly Tommaso came running back, holding the cherished Bianca in his arms; the poor thing was half dead with fright; her blue eyelids hid her round eyes; and her stiffened claws could not support her. The curé took her, opened her beak, and poured a few drops of wine down her throat; the fowl gradually recovered, (like a fine lady from hysterics) and began to flutter her wings. Tommaso seized the welcome opportunity of speaking to the curate.

"Sir," said he, "I have lost Mattea; the soldiers have promised me that I shall one day be a captain, a colonel, a marshal of France, and I don't know what besides. I—I—have enlisted for a dragoon!"

Buonaparte gave the general a sad look, as he smoothed his fowl's white feathers, and said to him: "General, I thank my nephew, the emperor, for his good intentions towards me, but I prefer remaining the curé of the poor and unknown little village, where I have been happy so long. I hesitated for a moment, and you see, God has punished me. . . . Say to Letitia that I hope (and believe firmly) she is still as good and conscientious as she was when a little girl. . . . Kiss my nephew, the little Napoleon, for me; may God keep them all on their thrones! They are good children for taking thought of their old uncle, but I desire neither a bishopric nor a cardinal's cloak. . . . Go, general, if you respect the wishes of your emperor's uncle, do not come here again."

When an officer received an order from the emperor, he was obliged to execute the imperial wish. If Napoleon said, "You are to take that town," it was necessary to take it; it was written that it was to be taken; his prophetic word was one of the thousand causes of his great success. Now, he had said to the general: "You will take my uncle, the curé, from his living, and make him come to Paris, or take him to Rome; he must be near me, or near the Pope; it matters not which; he will do well whichever he chooses, but it must not be otherwise; he must at least become a bishop."

The general entreated, supplicated, and, at last, insisted that the curé should alter his decision. The brave soldier could not understand a man's refusing the grand cross of the legion of honour, a bishopric, the revenues of a diocese, a cardinal's hat and influence. However, the good curé remained firm to his resolution;

he resisted the general's supplications, and when threats were used, he replied with the bitterness of an irritated Corsican, and with the authority of an aged relative, who was not to be coaxed or flattered by the inconsiderate youth and ambition of his great nephew: "General, I have given you my answer, and I will not swerve from it."

The disappointed general was forced to retire without executing his mission, and his noisy escort evacuated the village.

When Napoleon heard of the bad success of his ambassador and this utter want of ambition in a Buonaparte, he shrugged his shoulders with contemptuous pity.

Mattea was married to the dragoon, and became, in time, the wife of a colonel. Tommaso was, in a few years, a captain in the Imperial Guard.

And the good curé, Buonaparte, died before the termination of the first empire, beloved and regretted by all around him. Alas! he was, after all,—says the French account from which this little narrative is rendered into English—the happiest of his family.

PUNGENT SALTS.

OUR British choral boast of "ruling the waves" is a very old one. We can trace it back to sturdy bloodthirsty ancestors among the old vikings who never sought shelter of a roof, who had no other kingdom to rule than the sea. Sea-kings who shouted their song in the midst of the tempest

The force of the storm helps the arms of the rowers, The hurricane is carrying us the way we would go, little dreaming of descendants in half a dozen mild elderly gentlemen of the present day, content to "rule the waves," from ten till four, at The Admiralty, Whitehall, London, W.C.

Almost all the information we possess of our piratical old ancestors, the wave-rulers of a thousand years since (for the lines about "the flag that's braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze," are singularly correct in their chronology) we derive from the Sagas, or songs of the Skalds, a collection of strange wild stories of adventure in verse or measured prose, by the Scandinavian bards.

The profession of pirate, or viking, was held highly respectable, and not disdained by men of the highest rank. The qualification for the service was the performance of some exploit of personal prowess, which should entitle a man to the confidence of a band of champions as their commander. The law of bravery laid down for the followers themselves was not unlike that hinted at in the old schoolboy's rhyme—

Two skinny Frenchmen
And a Portugee,
One jolly Englishman
Whacked all three.

It was understood that any man ought to beat a single enemy, that he ought to make a

respectable appearance against two enemies, and to show fight against three; but that it would not be disgraceful to run away from four. Each viking governed his champions in his own way, gaining greater fame in proportion as his regulations were more strict and rigorous than those of his compeers. For example. Half and Hserolf, both sons of a Norwegian king, took to the profession. Hserolf had a number of ships which he manned indiscriminately with serfs and freemen, ruling them mildly. Hserolf was beaten by almost every opponent. His brother Half had only one ship, but he picked twenty-three king's sons for his companions, requiring each as a test of strength to lift a mighty stone which twelve ordinary men could scarcely stir. He forbade to his champions the society of women or children; he made them bare themselves to the fiercest tempests, and would not allow them to dress their wounds in battle till victorious. For nearly twenty years Half was the terror of the Western Seas, with a reputation of never having been vanquished in fight. So stringent was his discipline that when returning home, his vessel overlaiden with plunder and nearly foundering in sight of the Norwegian shore, the crew drew lots who should cast themselves into the sea to save their viking his cargo. The losers jumped overboard without a murmur, so that the ship, relieved of their weight, came safely to land.

The viking could govern his vessel as a clever rider controls his horse. It was required of him to be able to run along the oars while they were in motion, and to throw three javelins to the mast-head, catching each alternately in his hand without once missing. He was not afraid of going out of sight of land, and never thought of coming to anchor when clouds hid the stars. True, he had no compass, but there was always a cast of hawks or ravens on board, and when in doubt about the direction in which land lay, he had only to loose one of these, satisfied that the bird would instinctively make for the nearest shore. Whither the bird flew he steered. It was all one to the viking what land he reached, so long as it was land and not his own land; for his aim was plunder, and his creed was, where there is habitable land there is sure to be that. The birds seem to have had an unfortunate propensity for leading these gentlemen to Ireland and Britain. Ireland, indeed, appears to have been the first of our islands favoured with the visits of the northern marauders, and Johnstone mentions a significant fact in connexion with their visits. "The fertile Erin," he says, "was long the great resort of the Scandinavians, who, from the internal dissensions of the natives, gained considerable footing." Poor Ireland! She was suffering from Fenians even in those days. However, by way of compensation, Ireland became a sort of Paris to the vikings, in setting them the fashions; for they took to aping Irish manners and talking Celtic, until the celebrated Irish King Brian Boru drove them out

of the country early in the eleventh century, and made Irish unpopular with the vikings.

It cannot be concealed that our predecessors in ruling the waves were a terrible set of ruffians. Not content with simple plunder, they butchered alike those who submitted to their outrages, and those who resented them, showing mercy neither to age nor sex. Believing themselves the avengers of Odin against disciples of all other religions, they were especially severe on the clergy, putting them to death with tortures, and burning their churches, as Scott says, "to light the way to their barks again."

Doubly terrible was the viking when "berserker." This was a violent kind of frenzy with which he was liable to be seized, attributed by various writers to intense excitement of the imagination, or to the use of stimulating drugs or drinks. In this state he became dangerous to friends and foes; he would foam at the mouth and vent his fury against trees and rocks; he would swallow red-hot coals and throw himself into the fire. If at sea when the fit came on, he would often slaughter half his crew and destroy his shipping before his companions could land him at some desert island, there to tear up the trees by the roots and commit all manner of havoc upon inanimate nature until, his strength exhausted, he would lie senseless and prostrate, then wake up recovered. Almost all the great vikings became "berserker" at times. Indeed, when a seaking received any deadly insult from an enemy that he could not avenge, it seems to have been a point of honour that he should become "berserker" on the spot.

Halfdan was a king of Sweden and a viking besides. He had seized the crown from Sivald, and slain Sivald and his five sons, all in a state of "berserk" madness. When Hartben the sea-king came up with twelve champions to attack him, Halfdan offered to fight him and his entire crew single handed. This insolent proposal inflamed Hartben with such awful fury that he immediately became "berserker," and killed six of his own champions in the fit. He then rushed on Halfdan with the remaining six, but he and they all fell dead beneath the terrific blows of Halfdan's mace.

The viking's first vessel was nothing better than the trunk of a large tree hollowed out by fire like Robinson Crusoe's boat, and called "holk," a word still surviving in our language as "bulk." The British Museum contains a specimen of one of these ancient holks, found on the Sussex coast. But in process of time the viking became master of a much larger vessel, carved and painted and fashioned into the form of some fantastic monster, usually that of a dragon. Such was Rolf's famous ship called the "Dragon Grimsnoth." Often as their vessels were wrecked in the fierce North Sea storms, the hardy pirates who survived would yet defy the tempest, and even the gods themselves, holding on their course, as the Sagas say, "along the track of the swans."

A viking would marry occasionally three or

four wives; but would seldom waste time on courtship. He evidently regarded it professionally. When he heard of a lady possessed of beauty and wealth, he would fit out his vessel and demand her of her father. Should the misguided parent refuse the honour of becoming his father-in-law, the viking burnt him out of his house, and returned with his bride, his vessel laden with all the spoil he could conveniently lay hands upon, by way of dowry. An unwilling father had no alternative but consent or fight. Regnald, a Norwegian king, who had refused the peremptory demand of Gunnar the Swedish viking, for his daughter Moalda, not only set himself instantly on the defensive, but hid the princess and all his treasures in a mountain cavern, determined to baffle his enemy, even if beaten. But Gunnar came with a fleet of vessels, and, after a fierce battle, killed the king, and contrived to find out the place of Moalda's retreat. He returned to Sweden with his bride and her treasures, and the Skalds sang his praises in the Kianesinga Saga.

Here is a love story from the Volsunga Saga. Hagbarth and his three brothers, all of them sea-kings and sons of the King of Drontheim, sailing together in the North Sea, met the fleet of the sons of the Danish king Sigr. They fought, of course. The battle lasted all day, and at night was still undecided. A circumstance of frequent occurrence among the vikings then happened: each contending party becoming suddenly impressed with the bravery of his opponent, the weapons fell from their hands in mutual approbation of each other's valour; and, having sworn eternal fidelity—ratifying the treaty by mingling blood drawn from each other's veins in token of indissoluble union—the Danish princes invited their enemies of an hour before to visit the court of their father. Hagbarth and his brothers enjoyed the hospitality of King Sigr for many days; but, during their sojourn in Zealand, Hagbarth gained the heart of the king's daughter, the Princess Signa. The Danish princes, however, refused him her hand, contrary to their father's inclination, on the ground that he was not their equal in birth. Hagbarth and his three brothers, in defiance of their treaty, immediately hewed the Danish princes in pieces before their father's eyes, and fled. But Hagbarth found existence insupportable separated from her to whom he had pledged his troth. Disguised as an old woman, he returned to Zealand, and obtained admission to Signa's chamber. He swore to live or die only by her side. A courtier recognised him as Hagbarth, and, notwithstanding his becoming "berserker" and performing prodigies of valour, he was overpowered by numbers and taken prisoner. Some of the council of nobles who tried him were for sparing his life, and proclaiming him the husband of Signa, on account of his bravery; but by sentence of the majority he was condemned to be hanged, and that by a rope made of "widdie" (twigs), for the greater disgrace. They brought

out Hagbarth to be executed before the window of the princess's apartment, in order to add the greater sting to his punishment. But Signa, who had vowed not to survive her lover, set fire to her chamber and perished in the flames. When Hagbarth saw this proof of her devotion, he besought his executioners to hasten his death, that he might the quicker rejoin her faithful spirit in the Halls of Valhalla.

The passion for maritime adventure seems to have animated the female breast into rivalry with the opposite sex, for many ladies of high birth exchanged the veil for a heavy coat of linked armour and a brazen helmet. Placing themselves at the head of a band of pirates, they became Skjöld-Meyar, Maidens of the Shield, distinguished as much for bravery in battle as for chastity and gentleness at home.

The wooing of a sea-queen was a hazardous business. Laying siege to her heart or attempting to captivate her affections was completely futile. The only way was to blockade her in some narrow bay, and then engage her in single combat. Generally, as in the case of Alfilda, the chaste and beautiful Ostrogoth princess, there were a couple of notable champions guarding her person, who had first of all to be disposed of. Alfilda's lover, a young sea-king, named Alf, slew these two in single combat. But Alfilda was not so easily won. Clothing herself and her maidens in ring mail, and joining her crew of pirates, she embarked in her swiftest vessel, and gave Alf a year's long love chase. One after another Alf conquered every ship of her fleet, and then blockaded his mistress in the Gulf of Finland. She came out to fight. Alf grappled the maiden's ship, boarded it, and, after a terrific hand-to-hand encounter with the queen herself, he clove Alfilda's helmet with his axe, disclosing her beautiful features and long flowing hair. The sight of her beauty was too much for her adorer. He presented her his weapons; for he could fight no more. Alfilda, doubly conquered by the valour and generosity of her lover, married him on the spot, while Alf's best champions availed themselves of the opportunity to take the sea-queen's maiden attendants to wife. For the whole of the year, in anticipation of some such result, Alfilda had carried a priest on board to perform the ceremony.

The legend of Wayland, the smith, who forged the viking's most treasured sword blades, of such admirable temper that they would cut through rock or iron without losing the edge, is too familiar for repetition; but it may be mentioned, in connexion with a strange legend of the old sea-kings, that Wayland was believed to have married one of the Valkyriur, or Choosers of the Slain. This was, however, probably no more than a mythological way of stating how keen were Wayland's sword-blades, and how fatal in use. The Valkyriur of the Sagas correspond to the Fates of the Greeks.

These fatal sisters chose and foretold those who should fall in battle. They carried Odin's message of invitation to the warriors he loved best, to meet him in Walhalla, and they poured out the ale and mead for the solace of the heroes who sat round Odin's board. They visited the slain at sea in the form of swans, and carried the hero's soul straight to the line where the sea and sky meet, into Odin's presence, and into the halls of Walhalla.

The vikings found plenty of employment for the fatal sisters, for some of their battles were on a tremendously large scale, and resulted in fearful slaughter. At the naval battle of Bravalla, between Harald Golden Teeth, and Sigurd-Ring, the usurper of the Swedish throne, all the sea-kings and the Maidens of the Shield ranged themselves on one side or the other. Sigurd-Ring's fleet alone is said to have consisted of two thousand five hundred ships, and the number is not considered to be exaggerated, taking into account the small capacity of the little barks employed. There were seventy-four champions in the Danish fleet, while the Swedes boasted of ninety-six sea-kings, supported by all the picked archers of Norway. Harald, with fifteen kings and thirty thousand of his Danes, was slain, and the Swede bought his victory at a cost of twelve thousand of his bravest warriors. The tumulus which marks the burial place of the slain is said to be still pointed out. "We did not permit the ravens to be in want of food," says the Skald, "those who were slain became the prey of the ravens. We hew'd with our swords."

Dr. Taylor's *Revolutions, Insurrections, and Conspiracies of Europe*, a book of patient and scholarly research, which, for some unaccountable reason, fell dead from the press some twenty years ago, is the source whence most of the preceding information is derived.

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